No. 134

Our Household Pet.

INSIDE THE GATES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "BLACK HORSE AND CARRVALL."

A little child shall lead them.—ISAIAH.

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—JESUS.

These are they which make poor men rich.—BISHOP HALL.

'T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.—LONGFELLOW.

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TO THE

Bereaved Fathers and Mothers,

INTO

WHOSE HOMES, DURING A MINISTRY OF TWENTY YEARS,

THE AUTHOR

HAS BEEN CALLED TO SPEAK WORDS OF COMFORT AND INSTRUCTION IN THE HOURS OF DEEPEST SORROW;

AND

In Memory

OF THE DEAR CHILDREN SAFELY GARNERED FROM THE HOMES OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE,

AND

IN TOKEN OF AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE,

This Volume

IS MOST TENDERLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE author is indebted to a little dying girl, not much over half a dozen years old, for the title of this book. The little sufferer was nearing the gates of the Celestial City; her weeping father sat by her bedside, holding the hand of his dear child in his own, while his face was wet with tears. In a moment of ease, for she was a great sufferer, she looked up into that tearful face and said: "Papa, do n't cry; I 'll be just *inside the gates* when you come."

What could have been said more touchingly beautiful than that? How full of cheer! How full of comfort! What stronger chain is there

to bind the heart of a stricken parent about the gates of heaven than the knowledge that a dear child is inside those gates?

For the subject-matter of this book, he is indebted to a sad, and yet joyful, experience. He knows what it is to be "joyful in tribulation." He writes about what he has felt, as well as thought.

He and his companion have gone away four times from the new-made grave of a sweet child. And in this hard discipline they have learned that in the most bewildering gloom a star may yet shine out of the heavens to guide us on the voyage of life, and that the blackest cloud which ever hangs over mortal sky has a silver lining to the eye of faith. They have mourned in their Gethsemane, and they have rejoiced on their Olivet.

There are those whose eyes may fall on these lines, whose dear children stand at the gates of "home, sweet home," or who come tripping over the pavement to meet them when they return from places of toil or pleasure, who

have not been called to pass through the sorrows of bereavement. Still, they may read this book, and be possibly all the better prepared for the affliction when it does come.

The author has not forgotten that there are other gates than those of the heavenly world to be thought of. The *Home*, the *Sunday-school*, and the *Church*, are sacred inclosures. Here are gates to be garlanded with beauty, and guarded with care.

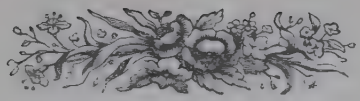
There are many homes in this world where loving mothers preserve with religious care the little "playthings" which the baby left, and cherish sweet memories of the dear ones "gone on before." To all such these pages offer instruction and comfort, with what success the reader must be the judge.

Hoping, then, that what he has written may serve in some degree to brighten the pathway of others, and make them stronger to bear up under the burdens of life; and that it may, though it be in a small way, call more attention to the child and its moral culture; and with a

sincere and earnest desire that both writer and reader may become in heavenliness "as a little child,"—he sends this volume forth upon its mission.

THE AUTHOR.

JACKSON, MICHIGAN, 1875.



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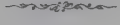

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Short and Simple Annals.

"THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howsoe'r defended,
But has one vacant chair.
The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mourning for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted."

"Had he lived and fallen (as who of us
Doth perfectly? and let him that is proud
Take heed lest he do fall), he would have been
A sadness to them in their aged hours.
But now he is an honor and delight,
A treasure of the memory, a joy
Unutterable; by the lone fireside
They never tire to speak his praise, and say
How, if he had been spared, he would have been
So great and good and noble."

I.

Short and Simple Annals.

READER, have you ever walked slowly and thoughtfully through a cemetery? I know you have. It was, perchance, on a pleasant Summer evening, before the twilight shadows had fallen, when all was still and hushed, that you wended your way amid the tombstones, and thought of the dead.

These habitations of the dead are every-where. Close beside every city, village, and hamlet, filled with men and women whose hearts are pulsating with life and hope, there is the city of the dead, where "every tombstone we look upon in this repository of past ages is both an entertainment and a monitor."

As you walked there on that Summer evening, and thought of the dead, and of the great

hereafter, there came over your spirit a feeling of inexpressible sadness. The scenes around you became prophecies of your own dissolution. The thoughts of death came welling up in your mind, and you said to yourself, "I, too, must die."

But as you walked there, amid those marble slabs and grassy mounds, where old and young, poor and rich, friend and stranger, lay buried together in that equality which the grave gives; and as these solemn surroundings impressed themselves upon you, did there not also come to you a feeling of hope which sweetened the sadness? Did not your thoughts bound

> "From death's dark caverns, in the earth below,
> To spheres where planets roll and comets glow?"

And did you not look away from this world of sin and anguish, labor and care, to that bright world beyond the shadows of the grave, where the soul shall have eternal rest?

There, on one tombstone, was a finger pointing upward, which told of the hope cherished by some stricken heart. And again, on the head-stone of a little grave was carved a lamb or dove, symbol of innocence. Here, too, were choice flowers, expressions of love, emblems of the soul's immortality. As you strolled about

beneath the weeping willows, and read the epitaphs, and saw the emblems of hope and love, you felt a strange drawing toward the better life which lies just beyond the boundary of our present vision.

I am now going to beg a few moments of your time, and ask you to take a walk with me into a very small cemetery, comprising four little graves. To me this is in one sense a sad place, in another it is not. I am sad when I think of the loss I have sustained; but when I remember the dear children, and think of their bliss, I am glad. My heart has bled, my spirit has reeled beneath successive blows; I have walked the way of sorrow with a bowed head; still, I have not fainted nor fallen. In the midst of all these afflictions my confidence has not been shaken; I have been able to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him."

We must look upon death and dying as one of the necessary steps in our great life journey. Death is not the end of being; it is rather the beginning. As you and I stand by the graves of our dear children, it is our privilege to feel that they have been promoted. They have been saved the hardships and turmoil of these slow-rolling years of earth-life, and have commenced on the higher plane of spiritual being. They

have reached the Summer land, the land of beauty and of song,

> "Where fragrant flowers immortal bloom,
> And joys supreme are given."

They are gone from us, but we shall meet them again. Blessed thought! As we sit by our little graves, the curtain is lifted before the eye of faith, and light comes streaming in upon us from above. We forget the past, and look forward to the meeting-time; and there comes over the spirit a sweet hope, that is like a beautiful sunrise after a dark and perilous night.

But what means it that so many of our world's population die in infancy? Go into any cemetery and number the little graves, and you will almost wonder what fatal scourge has swept away the dear lambs from so many households. What cruel Herod has murdered the innocents? I can see no reason why a man who lives to be seventy should not live to be a hundred, or even five hundred years old. There is evidently a reason for it in the mind of the great Father, and a law against it. We know that people sometimes "die of old age." The human machine seems to wear out, and the spirit takes its flight. I can not see why my children should have died, why your sweet and promising child must die. I only know that die they do, and

die they will, till the end of time. Shield them by day and by night, guard their clothing, their food, and their habits; and while good care may preserve some, and thus decrease the "death-rate," yet still they will die. The strong, healthy, robust child will sicken in a day, and another fresh mound will tell of sad hearts and a desolate home, and of another beautiful spirit redeemed and crowned in the everlasting kingdom. I can only say that in that which is so universal there must be some good. Happy are they who can look up and say, "Our Father."

It is not for the purpose of obtruding my personal griefs on the ear of a patient and considerate public that I attempt to recount my own sad experiences. This chapter is, at least in part, exceptional, and I place it here as an apology—rather, I should say, as the assignment of a reason why I write on this subject. Perhaps my affection gets the better of my judgment. Still, I can not convince myself that I ought to omit what follows. It seems fitting that I should lay the foundation for what I have to say in my own personal experience of sorrow; and, consequently, when I offer words of comfort to others, they will know that I speak from the same grounds where they have stood.

It will not take you long to read these "Short and Simple Annals," while it gives me a peculiar pleasure to put these names in just here. If you were passing by the place where these little ones sleep, you would willingly pause and read the names and the inscriptions on their tombstones, as I have done many a time—names even of strangers; and as I read I wondered about the sorrowing hearts and the vacant chairs, and tried to feel a deep, pure sympathy for the bereft. Then, you will please regard this chapter as a little monument erected by a stricken father to the memory of four dear children—the fourth an adopted child—whose departure to their upper home makes him at times long to follow them. These little graves are to me a border land, quite on the verge of heaven. I sit there, this moment, in my imagination feeling that I am not far from the kingdom, and from those I love.

I do not believe in giving way to a grief that will neither be solaced nor controlled; equally do I not believe in a stoical creed which seeks to banish from the heart its warmth, and robe it in the chilliness of an iceberg. My sorrow has not been greater than that which has come upon thousands of others, perhaps not half so great as that which has befallen many another

household; but still it has been great. I have had my sorrow and my joy; the comfort I have felt may comfort others. I cherish the warmest love for children. All these considerations move me to write.

The first born and first buried of my household was our little "Pet." Just why we spontaneously called her so I can not tell, only that she was a real pet in the family. All loved her, all petted her, all enjoyed her childish companionship, all were interested in her baby prattle; and even grandpa, old and venerable, yielded to the universal sentiment, and became her loyal subject. She quite won his heart one day, by looking up into his face, and with both hands laying hold of his long, white beard. She drew him down to her, or herself up to him, I scarcely remember which; but ever afterward she was "grandpa's pet."

Now, I very well know that some staid, sober, and solid kind of people would call all this mere sentimentality, and regard it as positively unmanly and unwomanly to indulge in it. But as an offset to what they may say or think, I would remark that whatever is so innocent, and so productive of a better kind of feeling, should be cultivated, for the fruit it yields in real and substantial pleasure.

Life is very short, our families are soon broken, our dear friends are ever going from us; so it should be our study to get out of life all the joy we can. The truth is, one can not afford to dispense with these "sweet amenities" of life. They cost so little, and yield such golden harvests of comfort to the heart, that I wonder why this great world is not richer in them than it is.

Our "Pet" was known by no other name in the whole circle of relationship. Years have passed away since her sweet spirit winged its way to heaven. The companions of her childhood have grown to maturity; but whenever I meet them, though these long years have passed away, they still carry in their recollection the name of their playmate—they still talk to me of "Pet." It does me good to know that she is remembered; it shows she did not live in vain. "Pet," with us, did not mean a spoiled child. The word, to our minds, expressed rather the idea of fondness; with her it was only a name. She came to us on the 12th of April, 1853, and left us on the 21st of October, 1856. In her baptism we named her Anna Emily. A little tombstone in the cemetery at Twinsburg, Ohio, my first pastoral charge, bears the name, and beneath it the dust, of the dear departed child.

"Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew,
She sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven."

She is safe "inside the gates."

That quiet and beautiful place is holy ground to us. But let me tell you a little more of the sad story. J. Espey came and went, but remained with us a much shorter time than she whose "little feet had climbed the golden stair." He was born January 22, 1858, and died the following August. It seemed as if he had just called to make our acquaintance before speeding on to his real home. His was a spirit destined not for time, but for eternity. Nearly a score of years have passed since I pressed him to my heart as my dear boy. He lingers in my memory yet as a sweet babe, full of romp and frolic. I love to sit down quietly, and live over those days again. It is like turning back the pages of some charming book, to re-peruse those passages which pleased me most. I do not wish to forget my boy. I can this moment see him, as he used to sit on the floor, surrounded by his toys. I can see him dropping all when he heard my heavy step approaching; and then he would look up into my face, and plead so eloquently to be taken into my arms, and carried to see the horse, or out into the door-yard to see the birds and flowers.

I can see him as he grew sick and pale and thin, and as he lay in his crib with congestion of the brain, slowly but surely coming under the fatal touch of death. I well remember, though long and busy years have passed since then, the sad moment when the spirit left the body, and the day when we laid him away to sleep by the side of his little sister, our "Pet." On the same tombstone in that rural cemetery are the two names, which, though unknown to the world, have a tender meaning to two struggling mortals. He, too, is safe "inside the gates."

Then, again, while pastor of the Mathewson-street Methodist Episcopal Church, in Providence, Rhode Island, our third child sickened and died, and now lies entombed in Swan's Point Cemetery, within sound of the beating waves of Narragansett Bay. No more truly delightful spot could be found on this round earth for grave of child or man. He came to us April 1, 1863, and left us July 29th, of the same year. We called him Joseph Mathewson, after the Church of which I was pastor. His little body knew no day free from pain. It seemed such a mystery that a sweet, innocent child should be made to suffer so much. He expired in a terrible convulsion, which I had no power to relieve. But I knew that death was

the portal which would admit him to the society of those which had gone before.

"Three cherubs met upon the other shore."

He is mine, safe "inside the gates."

The years passed away, and 1870 found us at Adrian, Michigan, one of the garden-spots of the West. The church is one of the finest, the society one of the largest. The parsonage was roomy, and the grounds around were so inviting, that I could not help thinking what a good home we could offer to some one of the many little waifs, thrown upon the world by adverse fate, in need of a home. But there were other rooms, larger than those of the parsonage, and more beautiful, that were tenantless, and other grounds than those surrounding it that had long been unpressed by the feet of childhood. I mean heart rooms, heart grounds. These rooms were all ready for an occupant. Dark shadows had fallen on those grounds, which the tripping of little feet and the merry, ringing laugh of childhood would dispel.

Home without children is not home, in its highest, truest sense. In the early portion of married life, people may be satisfied to live alone, and enjoy each other's society, without the additional care of children; but there will

come a time in the life of such a family when the presence of children would be prized above any other earthly blessing. To see two old people living in the days of the "sere and yellow leaf," without child or grandchild to look to or lean upon, is a melancholy spectacle. It is a terrible penalty to pay for the selfishness of human nature. To see venerable people surrounded by their own offspring, blessed with children and children's children, is a beautiful sight, and the Great Father intends this to be the boon of most people. If death interposes, it must be received as a "blessing in disguise." But there are so many children born into the world homeless, deserted by one or both parents, or left orphans, that any who are deprived by death of their own, or denied the blessing by Providence, can yet find children to fill up the gap. It would almost seem as if God took some away to make room for others.

"But how can I love another person's child?" is often asked. The experience of most people who have tried the experiment of adopting children is, that they can and do love them, if they are lovable, as they would their own. Reader, if you have a house, open its doors to some poor child; give it a home. It will do you good, as well as the child.

At the time above mentioned, we felt a great desire to adopt some poor child and give it a home, and we so expressed ourselves to others. Some said, You may get yourself into trouble; you can not love it as your own. It may become wayward—a heart-break to you. My answer was, Life is a succession of risks and ventures. Our own children have as much of what divines call depravity in them as the children of other people. When people marry, they take risks; when men go into commercial speculations, they assume risks. Every child born has before it a life fraught with perchances. I said, I am willing to try it. If the child I take becomes wayward, it shall be no fault of mine; it will be so from its innate tendencies—and the chances will be in its favor if I take it; for I will throw around it the attractions of a Christian home, and follow it with my prayers. And who knows but I may thus "save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins?" Perhaps this is God's plan of making me useful to some one of my fellow-mortals. The child we take, through our influence and teachings, may grow up to a beautiful manhood or womanhood, and be a blessing to the world. Who can tell what good may come to two lives by such an act?

Within a short space of time quite a number of children were pointed out to me; but among them all I did not see any one that I could take to my heart as I wished to do, and I did not desire to bring into the family a dear child, and then throw open only one room in the heart. If I took one, it must have the whole heart. All this may seem a little selfish, but I think it is not. God has endowed us with certain tastes which grow out of our individuality, that highest quality of human nature. I am not to blame for my tastes; so the child I might not prefer might yet please some one else. I had my ideal. Then I felt that love must be the supreme power in my home, and unless I loved the child in a very true sense I could not do justice by it. Providence favored me.

A friend called one day, with a bright, sweet, little girl, three and a half years old, of good parentage. The age suited me. She was young, and would easily take root in this new home soil. Her hair was golden—she was what they call a *blonde*—her eyes were a light blue. Her form was lithe and graceful. She called up the memory of my own child, whom fifteen years before I had buried. It did almost seem as though my departed one had returned to me again. The instant my eyes fell upon her I

said, She meets my taste. In some way she pleased me, and there was "love at first sight." I need not record here the movements that followed, only to say that on the 1st day of April, 1871, little Carrie became a member of our family by adoption, and every room in the heart-house was thrown wide open to her; all the heart-grounds, as far as they could be, or ought to be, were consecrated to her. The Lord had taken away. Now he kindly gave, and I felt that I had a new aim in life. I unconsciously began to plan for Carrie. We lived for her, and she became as dear to us as our own lost babes. She seemed to have dropped down upon us like a bird from the skies. Her coming was as from heaven, and her presence gave us a new lease of life.

I may say that in the adoption of a child there may be—there was with me—the additional obligation growing out of that adoption. Let people do what they will with their own children, not much is said; but in the case of adoption, how many there are who stand ready to criticise and condemn every act, using their influence to the injury of both parties in the contract! So I felt always the great responsibility resting upon me. I said, This is an adopted child.

Two years and a quarter passed away, years of brightness and joy in the parsonage. The walks, the drives, the evenings, the mornings, the Summers, the Winters: O how much of pure happiness there was crowded into that brief time! But now, again, comes the sad part. In the Summer of 1873, while enjoying a vacation of a few weeks among friends in another State—a trip taken largely in dear Carrie's interest—she sickened and died. On Sunday, July 6th, she complained of a severe pain in her head. She grew rapidly worse, until I saw her the victim of that usually fatal malady, *cerebro-spinal meningitis;* and on the following Friday evening, just as the sun was casting his setting beams through the windows, the spirit of the dear child went away from our sight. I carefully preserved the little body, brought it to our home, and laid it away to rest in Oak Wood Cemetery, near the edge of a steep bank, at whose base flow the waters of the River Raisin. I had gone as pastor to that same beautiful spot more than threescore times, to care for others who had been called to part with their friends; but now the arrow had struck me, and I was bleeding from the wound. But the words of consolation I had so often tried to speak to others came back to me now, and the Father

gave me the opportunity of practicing in my own life what I had been preaching all these years to others.

Little Carrie was a universal favorite. In our frequent drives with the "Black Horse and Carryall," her place was on the front seat. I promised her, when she was sick, that when we got home she should go riding in the carryall. I did not think then that she would die; but I made the promise good, as the reader will see from the following brief extract, cut from a local paper the day following the funeral. This may have no special interest to others; but it does a stricken heart good to tell the story, for which I crave the reader's indulgence:

"A Sad Bereavement.—A very large congregation assembled at the Broad-street Methodist Episcopal Church yesterday, at four o'clock P. M., to attend the funeral of Carrie Estella, adopted daughter of Rev. J. H. M'Carty. Little Carrie was an unusually bright child, and was beloved by all who knew her. Large numbers of children were present to witness the services, and show their interest in and love for Carrie. . . . It was indeed a beautiful and impressive service. The little casket, of black walnut, trimmed with silver molding, was borne by four boys of the Sunday-school, and drawn to the cemetery in the family carryall. Four little girls, dressed in white, were seated, two on each side of the casket, while a groom led the black horse which drew the sweet child on her last ride. The pastor, with his wife and child, left home a few weeks ago, under the most favor-

able auspices, for a little vacation, and while with their friends were thus sorely stricken." . . .

Her death was indeed a "sad bereavement" to me. I had made no calculation for such an event. But she was mine two and a quarter years, and every day of these years she made brighter. How glad I feel that she was ours so long! I felt very grateful to my Heavenly Father for such a blessing. Years may pass away, but the name and memory of Carrie, and of my other dear children, will never pass away from the recollection. Amid earth's shadows and sunshine we toil on, hope on.

"In that land of beauty, in that home of joy,
By the gates they 'll meet us, 'neath that golden sky,
Meet us at the portal, meet us by and bye."

The Empty Crib.

"O, my heart is a garden, and blossoming there
Is a fragrant and delicate flower;
I guard it with care;
So tender and rare,
And so fair,
It would die in a shower.

O, my heart is a desert, my flower is not here;
I knew 't would be gone on the morrow.
And sadly I go,
Wearily and slow,
To and fro,
O'er the sands of my sorrow.

Ah, my flower is transplanted to heaven so bright,
By the Gardener; true to his love,
It will bloom and be fair,
And be safe for me there,
In his care,
Till I 'm summoned above."

II.

The Empty Crib.

I HAVE had no experience in life which has caused me a deeper sorrow of heart than the death of a dear child. I thought, when I came home from the grave the first time, that the most expressive symbol of my loss was the little empty crib which stood in the corner of the room.

On beginning that very interesting chapter in our lives, housekeeping, one of the requisites was a crib. People can have in their own homes what boarders, whose chief study is to economize space, must generally be denied. Now that we had gone to housekeeping, the little two-year-old must have a crib.

Then I happened to be in just that condition wherein it was necessary for me to husband my

pecuniary resources, which at best were not very abundant; and hence, wherever it was possible, I used my hands, and whatever ingenuity I possessed, to construct articles for household use. Every well-furnished house, I thought, should have a crib. Mine must have one.

I am not ashamed here to put on record the fact that I could not afford to buy a crib such as I had seen at the furniture-shops, however desirable such an elegant article might be. Honest poverty is not to be despised. There is no other school where one learns so much, and so fast. It is really good to be poor. I think one of the chief mistakes we make, and one of the greatest barriers in the way of universal happiness, lies in thinking that the money we possess is our own, and that they who have much of it are most happy.

The discipline needed to ripen us into the better life often comes in the form of deprivations. The study of our means and our necessities; that is to say, the enumeration of what we want, or what we really must have—for our wants usually outnumber our actual necessities and the ability we possess of supplying them—is just such a study as humanity needs to develop the better traits.

In our journeys we often pass by many tidy-looking houses, where all the surroundings indicate poverty, but not always degradation. Some people are poor and low, others are poor and high. We must distinguish between these two classes. I refer to houses where every thing shows that there is the study of economy and neatness. There is the snowy curtain in the window, the pretty bed of flowers at the front door, the whitewashed fence, and many other things which go to indicate that those within are possessed of refined tastes and good traits of character.

Well, to return. I set to work at making a crib. I always could plan in mechanical matters better than I could execute. I would not care to show my work, but I can state the manner of procedure. The tools I used consisted of a saw, hammer, and auger. Taking the little one by the hand, I went to the barn, one bright, beautiful Autumn morning, to make a crib. It was an era in the dear child's life, a real gala-day. She was going to have a crib all her own, and papa was going to make it—a crib by a stretch of terms, by the way. She was as much interested in the work as I was, and knew nearly as well how to proceed as I did. I sawed off four blocks of wood, each about a foot in

length, into the ends of which I bored holes and put castors. Then I nailed on strips, for ends, sides, and bottom, and the crib was complete, with the most trifling outlay of time and money. When it was done I felt that my ingenuity had triumphed over my impecuniosity. The crib was put to its place, and the little darling of my house was as delighted with it as if she had come into the ownership of the most beautiful and costly piece of furniture in the world. For eighteen happy months, night by night, she sweetly slumbered in it, by my own bedside,

> "Tended and watched by angels, bending o'er,
> Waiting to bear her to that far-off shore."

I have looked back to that morning's work a thousand times, as to one of the most pleasant hours of my life. Making the "crib" yielded far more pleasure to father and child than if some one had presented us one much finer.

Sleeping by my bedside, the dear child would sometimes become wakeful during the long nights. Some noise would disturb her slumbers, or something in her dreams would affright her. Then she would call to me. I laid down with the care of her on my mind; it was my choice to do so. The first sound of that little voice would generally arouse me. She usually

said, "Papa, hold my hand." Then I would reach out and take her little hand in my own, and in a few moments she would fall asleep again. Some way, she felt secure with her hand in mine.

Now, is there not here a lesson for us all? Are we not all children of a common Heavenly Father? Are there not times when we are fearful and distrustful? Earth has many a long, dark night of sorrow, many a disturbing trial, many an enemy. Let us not forget our Father, who will take our hand in his. Can aught harm us if he protects? Can we in the darkness say and feel that we are safe, in the storm feel that no evil shall come nigh unto us? Is it not written, "He shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me?" O happy, trusting love, that can say, always, "My Father," and then lean on Him for support!

That little, homely crib of ours, which would not have brought three shillings in any second-hand furniture-shop, was still valuable to us be-because of its associations, and we preserved it a long time for the dear child's sake. The sight of that crib would call forth our tears. I sometimes thought we did wrong in giving way to our feelings so much. But what are these

emotions for? Then, again, would-be comforters would tell us not to grieve, for the child was better off than when it was living in the flesh, and that we could go to it by and by. All this may have been well-meant advice and consolation, which in the abstract was entirely true; but it utterly failed to make any impression on our minds.

Before death came to our home, I had often been called upon, as a pastor, to comfort others in their sorrows; and I too had given just such advice, to those who stood weeping by the coffins of their loved ones, as others were now giving to us. But when the sorrow touched me, I found how far short I had come in my efforts to impart consolation. I felt like going straightway to every poor, sorrowing mother whose child had died, to confess my fault, to unsay nearly all I had said, to bid them weep; for I found tears to be a relief to a wounded soul.

> "Tears yet are ours, whene'r misfortunes press;
> And though our weeping fails to give redress,
> Long as their fruits the changing seasons bring,
> Those bitter drops will flow from sorrow's spring."

God intended us to weep. Even "Jesus wept." It is said of the great Edmund Burke, that when he lost his only son his grief was appalling. He would sit in that unnatural calm-

ness of despair which was even more terrific than the display of the wildest passion. Then a burst of frenzy would come over him, and he would rush into the room where lay the form of his child, and call in accents of fearful anguish for the hope of his age and the comfort of his declining and now joyless years.

There is an old saying, "Little griefs speak; great griefs are dumb," which I can hardly indorse. In my opinion, it is a matter of temperament. Great griefs do speak. But, then, I know one's sorrows may become so great that there comes over the soul the "calmness of despair;" then tears are impossible. I have heard a broken-hearted mother say, "O, if I could only weep!" Such grief endangers health, and life itself. Here is mystery, an explanation of which would show us that we are fitted by this hard discipline the better to serve others. There are just two things in human life to be especially mindful of,—love to God and love to man. In such service we realize the highest perfection of our own being.

Ever, after death had invaded my home, I said to the bereaved and stricken ones around me, Weep, for in tears the spirit finds solace. After a baptism of tears the heart comes nearer its reconciliation. Tears shed at the

grave in some sense become a fresh tribute of love. When people become in the highest sense refined and cultivated in their feelings, they are more susceptible to sorrow, and more capable of true joy. There are heights of pleasure to whose bright summits the barbarian never comes, never can come. All genuine pleasure is spiritual, and implies high moral development. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." The sources of the truest life are not the material things which surround us. Then, welcome a spiritual cultivation that, while it makes us subjects of deeper woe, also elevates us to a companionship with angels. The savage mother can not mourn for her dead babe as the morally developed Christian mother mourns for hers.

> "Dearly bought, the hidden treasure
> Finer feelings can bestow;
> Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
> Thrill the deepest notes of woe."

If the Christian heart feels a deeper grief, its consolation is also greater. The Christian's hope comes in to assuage the troubled spirit.

As my second child gasped his last breath, and the spirit had fled, the mother bent over his little tender form, and gave full vent to her feelings. Up to this moment they were in part

suppressed. While there was life there was hope. Now that all was over, and the dear eyes were closed forever on this world, there was no feeling of that heart but what had its foundation in sorrow. She wanted to caress the little body once more, ere it grew stiff and cold. She craved, as a last act, the privilege of pressing the dear babe to her breast just one more time. It was an instinct of a motherly heart. Every tender emotion of that heart was stirred. The foundation of her whole being was shaken. Just then a well-meaning and really kind-hearted woman, one who had never lost a child, who never had one to lose, appointed herself mistress of ceremonies, and, being of strong will and equally strong arm, almost by force tore that bereaved and stricken mother from the lifeless form of her child, and bore her away to another room, vehemently exhorting her all the time not to weep and give way to her feelings; that it was wrong; that the indulgence of such grief was not the way to be resigned to the will of God. I say it was a well-meant effort to do a kind act; but if heart-instincts mean any thing, and surely they do, God has not endowed this human nature with such susceptibilities only to be crushed out. Then, the meant kindness was really an unkindness. The poor woman made a

mistake, that was all. But that mother, to this day, has not forgotten that hour, and never will she forget it while her memory is enthroned upon its seat.

Ever after death had come to my home, and by a bitter experience, I had been made to understand what the word bereavement meant, I said to those who came to me for consolation, It is your right to weep, your duty to feel. The Father does not expect you to go through all this without feeling. As the plowshare breaks up the hardened soil for seed-time and harvest, so God's providential chastisements prepare the hearts of his children for a glorious spiritual fruitage. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews xii, 11.) Through death He bringeth life, out of darkness he causes the beautiful light to stream. He has our whole existence in view, for eternity as well as time. He may make us unhappy now, in order to make us happy in the future. These griefs are a discipline which shall bring us nearer our Father. Some one has said, "The rod of affliction is a branch cut from the tree of life." The difficulty with us is, we are too earthly. If God had not

interposed, we should not have thought of him or the heaven he has prepared for us.

So I say the deaths of our children may be a bitter grief to us; but they become the burnished links of gold which bind our poor hearts about the throne of Infinite Love. With such views, I have gone to the sobbing mother, every fiber of whose body was quivering with suppressed emotion, and I have said to her, Weep, mother, you will find relief in tears. God has as surely constructed the heart for feeling as for pulsating, the eye for weeping as for seeing, else why does universal humanity weep when great sorrows come upon it? Why have all men located the emotions in the heart, I mean the fleshly heart? Such a universal sentiment is not without a foundation in the nature of things, and the heart does sometimes break literally. As the brain is the seat of intelligence, so the heart is the seat of the moral feelings.

I have said to the mother, Go, when the freshness and beauty of Spring come, when the buds are bursting into leaves, when the grass is green beneath your tread; go, when the sweet flowers are opening their petals and exhaling their fragrance, filling all the air with their delicate aroma; go to the little grave where your darling sleeps; plant flowers, train the myrtle,

and bedew the little mound with your warm, fresh tears; and in this service of love you will be soothed, your spirit will be calmed; you will have been in communion with the angels. They will come to you, as they came to Jesus, and "minister unto you."

I looked at the empty crib and wept; but I reasoned as well. My grief seemed too great to bear; but then I thought of the empty cribs in thousands of other homes in every land; and dear as were my children to me, to us, they were no dearer than other people's children were to them. I could see the brightness or the beauty of my own child as I might not see it in others; as others might not see it in mine. Every father should think his own the dearest in the world. Our children are sweeter to us, simply because they are ours. It is right for us to feel thus, and to act upon it as a principle. All men admire such a love, and such an expression of the tender affection. The Father has thus wisely thrown around the child this protective shield of love.

As I gazed on the empty crib, I thought of this great brotherhood of sorrow. How we do come together on this plane! The world sometimes seems very cold and formal; but then let some great calamity overtake us, and it will

wake up the love of human hearts all around us. People whom we did not know will come and speak tenderly to us, and proffer their services with a heartiness which we can feel. One after another came to me, of whose deep personal griefs I knew nothing, and could not know, until I had walked in the same hard road myself. And thus I learned to think more about them, and feel more for them.

I used often to wonder why Mrs. B—— always wore mourning, and why her face always had such a weary expression. She looked as though she had never smiled. Her features, which were naturally fine, had the semblance of a clay or iron cast, as if her face was never made to wear a smile. She did smile sometimes, poor woman! but it was the result of effort, and not the spontaneous outgushing of a glad and cheerful heart. I knew she had met with the loss of one or more children. Always, when I went there, she talked about them, and showed me their pictures. It seemed to do her good to tell over the story. I tried to comfort her by telling her that they were better off, and that she must look on the bright side, and live to meet them in heaven. But the Father prepared me to do Mrs. B—— and others good, by afflicting me in the same way. Then I could

go to her as I never did before; for we had a common sorrow. Just over in the cemetery were three little mounds in one lot, and near them one little grave in another lot. One day we met there, and in my heart I said, Poor, afflicted Mrs. B——, I do pity you! I thought it was no wonder that she looked sad and weary and disconsolate. There were her three little graves against my one; for up to that day my crib had only been emptied once—hers, three times. I had kissed my dying child, and sadly parted with it; she had kissed and parted with her three. I said, No wonder she wears the mourning garment, when all the birds of her nest have flown away to a new clime. If in my home the disappearance of one little form, the absence of two little pattering feet, should make the home, otherwise bright and cheerful, so unbearably dull and quiet, how must it seem in her home, from which three have been taken? Our homes from which children have been taken are

> "Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled.
> You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will;
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

I said to her: The frost which nips the foliage of the mulberry-tree does not kill the silk-worm cradled in its leaves. So death may blight our

homes, without destroying us. You have lost, I have lost; but there is good in it all. Let us arise from the earth, where we sit in our sorrow, and behold the day of God. Let us be learners in this school, where Jesus teaches to look through the grave out into the blissful regions of immortality.

> "What God intended as a blessing and a boon
> We have received as such; and we can say
> A solemn, yet a joyful, thing is life,
> Which, being full of duties, is for us
> Of gladness full, and full of lofty hopes."

There, too, was Mr. S——, whose son was a hopeless maniac, roaming the streets, at times raving wild—the dread of the household, the terror of the community. In his childhood he was unusually bright and promising. His early boyhood was really brilliant. The hopes of a whole family were centered in him. Even in his ravings, there was at times an effort at reason. It was like the sun struggling through the rifted clouds; but, alas! these clouds would not open, and the sun would stay hidden behind their thick masses. That father would often say, "O, if he had only died when he was a child, and I could remember him always as he was then!" But that flower had withered; that cup was dashed into fragments. The only prospect

was for poor G—— to be one of those unhappy beings who are destined to run at large, dreaded alike by young and old, against whom the asylum is closed because the case is incurable. Had he died in infancy, leaving behind him an empty crib, that fond father and mother would have mourned; but now they bewail a heavier affliction.

And there, too, was the C—— family. A beloved son had gone from home, they knew not whither. Perhaps he had sickened and died in some distant city; or, having gone to sea, he may by shipwreck or accident have gone to his final rest beneath old ocean's billows; or he may have met his fate by the hand of a midnight assassin, or died a languishing death in some foreign prison. His fate they never could know; and so, in agony of spirit, they wended their dreary way through unbroken years of suspense. Ah, I could look upon my empty crib, and feel sure that my child was safe "inside the gates;" I could go to my one little grave, and then to my two, and then to my three, and now four. I could plant flowers there, while I looked forward to the meeting-time which is sure to come by and by. I could call up their pretty ways, and their loving caresses. I could think of them, not as lost

to me, but saved for me; for I know where they are.

As I thought more about my empty crib, and came into closer sympathy with those who had been called upon to pass through these dark waters, I found myself becoming more fully reconciled to my loss. I settled down into the full conviction that it was all right and best; for it had taken place under the eye of my Heavenly Father, "who doeth all things well." I had nothing to remember of my dear children that was not pleasant, nothing to fear for them in the future.

A precious and comforting feeling of ownership in my children cheers me greatly. I can say they are mine yet; and mine they will be forever. I shall endeavor to show, in a subsequent chapter, how the child will grow in heaven; but, notwithstanding that, nothing can ever change the fact that these bright spirits in heaven were mine, in a very special sense. I was their earthly parent. You were once the father or mother of a little suffering mortal—now, of a glorified spirit before the throne of God.

My crib stood empty; for the child had gone where there is no night, where they do not sleep. That little crib not only signified the

absent child, but it led the thoughts up to the heavenly home, where she had gone,

> "Far beyond the reach of mortal ken.
> No eye hath seen it, nor hath human pen
> Portrayed the glories of that world above,
> Whose very atmosphere is love.
> There Christians, who in union dwelt on earth,
> Heirs of its mansions by celestial birth,
> In blest society shall meet and blend."

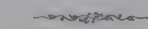
We are going home—the tender ones have gone on before us. They have reached the gates, which have opened to let them in, and they are safe.

Sympathy, True and False.

"THAT loss is common, would not make
My own less bitter—rather, more;
Too common. Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

. . . . . .

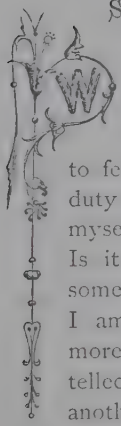
This truth came borne with bier and pall;
I felt it when I sorrowed most:
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."



"No radiant pearl, which crested fortune wears;
No gem, that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears;
Not the bright stars, which night's blue arch adorn,
Nor rising sun, that gilds the vernal morn,—
Shine with such luster as the tear that flows
Down virtue's manly cheek for others' woes."

III.

Sympathy, True and False.



WHEN all was over with my dear children, and the grave had shut them forever from my sight, I tried to feel reconciled. I felt that it was my duty to be resigned. But I questioned myself on this wise: What is resignation? Is it to be indifferent? Is it to be in some way hardened? Does it mean that I am not to love the dear ones any more? Then I remembered that the intellect is one thing, and the heart quite another. I knew intellectually that my children were gone from me, beyond my powers of recall. I might complain about it, and wish it were otherwise; but the great and sorrowful reality could not be changed. A mother who once lost her child said to her pastor, "I can not, I will not, have it so."

"Yes; but what are you going to do about it?" said he. Now, his answer might seem harsh; but he felt that an appeal to her judgment was necessary. We must be reasonable in our griefs.

I think there may be such a condition as mental resignation to the death of a child, while the heart yearns after and still clings to the object of its love. This I sought to feel in my own heart. My judgment assured me that there was some good in it all. God, who knows what is best for his children, had sent this sorrow on me and mine. My heart and mind were weighed down under the mighty burden of a great loss. Then I prayed to my Father to help me to endure the sorrow and the disappointment, to subdue the longing for the little clinging arms that death had unloosed, and the sweet voice and the patter of little feet that would never more make music in my home. Very soon I came to the realization of a great fact, namely: that my life was being molded by an intelligent will, rather than by a blind power in nature which had in it no pity. Looking up to God, and praying to be made obedient, enabled me to look forward to the time when I should be made "perfect through suffering."

Then, as never before, did I understand the words of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane,

when he cried out, in bitterness of soul, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt!" That he should go and pray thus three times over, intensifies the thought. Jesus did not rebel against the Father's will, even though he prayed to be delivered from the bitterness of the cup. His human nature here and in this way asserted itself; but his higher, his divine, nature came in to aid him in the fearful ordeal through which his soul was passing. That ordeal was not the betrayal, the trial, the crucifixion; it was of far deeper significance. It was a spiritual agony of some kind, which made his soul "sorrowful even unto death." It must be that in that hour he in some way, without partaking of sin, bore the sins of the whole world on his heart. He was then enabled to look back through all the past, and forward to all the future, while his eye swept around the whole horizon of the globe. Every woe of humanity then and there centered on him; then and there he "tasted death for every man."

But I was going to say that, as Jesus prayed "Let this cup pass," was it wrong for me, is it wrong for any father or mother, to pray the same prayer at the bedside of a dying child or beloved friend? Gladly indeed would I have

had this cup pass from me; but equally glad was I to know that if a burden of sorrow was laid upon me the Father would help me bear it. If Christ leads us into the dark, he will in time show us the "true light." Then did I begin to realize that I had a sympathizing friend in Jesus. He taught me how to lie in the dust and pray, "Let this cup pass from me;" he also taught me how to rise and say and feel, "Thy will be done." In clinging to my dear children, I only gave expression to the richest gift of God to human nature: the affections of the heart. "Let this cup pass—Thy will be done," exactly expresses the position of the trustful and obedient disciple. Saying thus, with wounded heart, I waited the coming of the Healer.

Very early in my ministerial life, I was called upon one day to minister consolation to a dying mother. It is a long time since that event—her name even has quite passed from my recollection; but I shall never forget the circumstances, and the thoughts that passed through my mind during that pastoral visit. There, on her bed, lay that mother, pale and emaciated, while every thing in the room bore the marks of poverty. There were her children, three little girls—the youngest scarcely two years old,

the eldest not more than seven. The father was not present; and, from what I afterward learned, his presence was an annoyance rather than a source of comfort to his family at any time. I was young in years, and had none of the experience which older ministers possessed, and which years have given me. The case was urgent; the poor woman, to all human appearance, would die in a few days. Taking a seat by her bedside, I talked to her about dying. She said she was not ready to die. I asked her if she loved the Lord. "O yes," she answered; "and in my poor way I have tried to serve him." Then I said, "God will save you; you have nothing to fear—only trust him." I inquired if she had ever made a profession of religion. She said she had, but had been deprived of the privilege of attending Church because she could not leave her children. I noticed that the mention of her children affected her very much. I told her that the Father looks at the heart, and not at the outward acts so much. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said the Savior. We can not know the heart, the interior springs of thought. God looks deeper than man looks. I may misjudge my fellow-man; but he who knoweth the heart always judges correctly. I told the dying

woman that duty never called in two directions at the same time. When it was her duty to stay at home, and take good care of the little ones who needed her motherly attentions, it was not her duty to go to meetings of any kind.

I did not say to her, but I will say here, that people may commit sin by too much church-going, as well as by too little. Christianity does not require of us to neglect home and children, husband or wife, to attend Church. I have known a man to attend meetings, to the neglect of his business and the payment of his honest debts. I have known a mother to attend meetings while her children were racing through the streets and taking advantage of her absence to have dancing-parties in the parlor. Still I do not think this is a very prevalent sin—the tendency is rather to neglect the meetings by the generality of mankind.

Believing all this, I assured that dying woman that, when she was at home caring for her children, she was just where God wanted her to be; that people can serve God well in the home, if they have any heart to serve him at all.

While I was talking, I noticed that she began to weep bitterly. The thought of her dear little girls, one of whom sat playing on the floor so innocently, so unconscious of its motherless

destiny, came up before her, and a great wave of sorrow swept across her soul. "I can not be resigned," she sobbed out. "I am afraid God will not save me."

It was not necessary to question her much. The difficulty in her case was apparent. That trio of little girls bound her to the world. But I said, in order to open the way to the subject, "What is there, dear woman, that you can not give up?" "My children," she answered, in broken utterances. "What will become of them? how can I leave them?"

Standing at the foot of the bed was an elderly, hard-featured woman, who seemed to have charge of the house. She stood there to hear the young pastor talk, and perhaps to come to his aid if necessary. "Never mind the children, Mrs. ——, God will take care of them." She spoke in a loud and harsh tone of voice. The latter part of the sentence was true, and was said as I should have said it myself, except in its harshness. I realized that I was in a most critical position, namely: to substitute a consolation that would commend itself to that loving mother's heart for that of the woman who said, "Never mind the children." As well might she have told her not to mind the shortness of her breath, or the burning fever that was literally

consuming her life. I said to her, by way of what I thought better counsel: "Dear woman, you must not expect that while you are rational you can or will lose your motherly interest in these three dear little girls. God has given them to you, and he has given you power to love them and care for them. He never means you to cease loving them while you exist, in this world or the next. You may sorrow greatly at the thought of parting with them, and you may pray your Heavenly Father to spare you to them, if it be his will; but you know that God is good, and if he takes you away it will be for some wise purpose, which you now can not see. 'Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face: now we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known.' You will love your children more even than you do now. Our Father may permit you to watch over them by day and by night, a guardian angel ever near. God does not expect you to lose all your rational affection for those who are so near to you. You and they alike are children of a common Heavenly Father; all are members of God's great family. They may be here, and you there; but you can surely trust them to the care of one so wise and good." I then opened my Bible, and read

the one hundred and third Psalm, which is so full of tenderness; and prayed for the mother, that she might be able to trust all to God, into whose care we should place all our interests.

I have every reason to believe that poor dying woman was the better for my visit. She said before she died that, without loving the dear children any the less, she could resign them to the hands of her Father in heaven.

When death came to my household, I learned something about human nature which I otherwise could not have known. God has various ways of schooling his children. There was one man in particular, whom I often met on the street, but to whom I had never spoken. I could never catch his eye long enough to even bow to him; and among the things I dislike in this world is that of bowing to people in a friendly way, and getting nothing but a stare in return. But when one of my children was lying dead in its little casket, this same strange, weird sort of a man came to the house early one morning, bringing a beautiful bouquet of flowers, which he had gathered with his own hands. He did not look up at me as I opened the door; but, handing the flowers to me, he said, "Put them on the little casket for me." He then

turned and walked rapidly away. That was true sympathy, modestly and beautifully expressed. Ever afterward I had a new feeling of interest in that strange man. I could readily excuse his singular manners, for he had proved himself to me at a time when small acts are appreciated.

There were some who came and took us by the hand, and scarcely spoke, or if they did it was only a few tender words, which were like precious balm laid upon the soul. There were some people, on the other hand, who seemed to think that the more they could harrow up every feeling of the heart the more good they were doing me. With characteristic officiousness they rushed in upon me, at times when perfect solitude, with my own thoughts, would have been more consonant with my feelings than their honest, perhaps, though unwise, efforts to impart consolation. By a persistent and endless system of interrogation, they would seek to inform themselves as to the nature and cause of the disease, and were sure to remark that it was always very fatal. Such people are quite apt to remind you that you might have known your child would die—they always felt it was not long for this world. Then, in their opinion, Dr. B—— would have understood and managed

the case much more successfully than Dr. C——, whom you employed, and who always lost so many patients, and gave such strong medicine. They inquire about the symptoms, and why you did this or that. They carry you to the grave, and speak to you of the "dismal falling clod," and express their regret that the burying-ground is "such a watery place," closing their attempts at consolation by exhorting you to "try and bear it, for it is the way of the world." It is hard to be deprived of one's friends—I had almost said it is harder to have one's privacy intruded upon by such miserable comforters. Genuine sympathy, like genuine piety, is usually quiet and undemonstrative; while either, put on for the occasion, is noisy and shallow. A stream of shallow water, only a few feet wide, makes more noise, as it flows along, than the Mississippi River.

I received from time to time, after the death of a dear child, some very tender letters. I will insert a few brief extracts from some of them, hoping that they may comfort others as they did me.

A brother minister wrote:

"We this evening received your note, breaking to us the sad news of the death of your dear child. We sympathize with you in this

your deep affliction. Even our children took a good cry when we told them they would never see their little playmate again. The news was so sudden and unexpected to us that we can scarcely realize it. Death has never yet, thanks to our Father, entered our home; and yet we can imagine something of your feelings in this your bereavement. What if it had been one of ours, whom we love so well? What if God had said, 'Restore your trust; give me back my own?' What would be our feelings, and where would be our consolation? Could we say, from the heart, 'Thy will be done?' Could we indeed feel that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven?' And yet, is not this the bereaved parents' consolation, that the lost child is now a bright spirit, infinitely more happy, better cared for, better educated, enjoying a purer society than is possible to this earth-life? The flower is not blasted, only transplanted. 'She is not dead, but sleepeth,' are the words of Jesus, and they are offered to you, sorrowing ones. Such would be my consolation, were mine to go; such must be yours, now that your child has been taken. Think not of your dear one as being in the grave, but in heaven. Think of her as mingling with the spirit throng. Feel that, as never before, your hearts are bound to

the throne of God. Remember that 'God doeth all things well.'"

Another wrote:

"The intelligence of the death of your dear child was as painful as it was unexpected to us. In your letter to us, a few days ago, you mentioned her sickness, but you apprehended no danger. O, how uncertain is life! I know you are sad. Your house is lonely enough. I need not exhort you to be resigned. . . . How cheering now must be the doctrine of the atonement and the resurrection. To you, the fact that Jesus died for all must be a precious thought just now. The sinless child is saved, even beyond a peradventure. The atonement says, 'All is well;' the resurrection truth compels the grave to say to the weeping parent, 'I will restore.' You sorrow now, as you look upon your empty crib; but think of the spirit-treasure you have laid up in heaven. How strong is the tie which binds your hearts to heaven! Yours is now a dispensation of sorrow. By and by God will raise the curtain which hides the mortal from the immortal, and you will see over into the better land, and your sorrow will be turned into joy."

I received very many such letters from my friends, filled with words of comfort and instruc-

tion; and being so true, and so kindly tendered, they made me feel thankful for sympathy. And yet there was the same void, the same cry of the heart after its treasure. It is easy to say, "Be reconciled;" but the poor bruised and bleeding heart can not forget its pain and loss so easily. Only time, that great healer, and the precious pity and love of God, can lift us above such mighty griefs.

A dear sister wrote:

"It is only the breaking of the casket; the jewel is untouched. . . . You have the consciousness of her safety, and the memory of her sweetness, which must hang in your sky like a vision of glory. . . . Never before did I realize what a long, dark shadow one little coffin would cast. But if it be true that roughest rinds fold over sweetest fruits, and heaviest clouds rain the most ample harvests on the fields, and if deepest griefs have holiest ministries, then shall we all be better because of this bereavement. . . . 'God's ways are past finding out;' we can only trust and wait. To the eye of faith the pearly gates stand open wide, and out of the beautiful heaven I imagine the voice calls to us all:

'Come to this happy land,
Come, come away.'"

This universal human sympathy does put rather a cheerful aspect on life, after all. It is the rainbow that arches grandly over the cloud of sorrow; it is the sweet aroma that comes after the crushing of the flower.

The first time I rose in the pulpit after a death in my household, I felt strangely drawn toward the people. That sorrow seemed to be divine. I said, It is of God; I am a better and a wiser man than I should have been without this experience. I am glad I have friends in heaven, glad I have children in heaven,—

> "Spirits elect, through suffering rendered meet
> For those blest mansions: from the nursery-door
> Bright babes, that climb up with their shining feet
> Unto the golden floor.
>
> These are the messengers, forever wending
> From earth to heaven, that faith alone may scan;
> These are the angels of our God, descending
> Upon the Son of man."

A dear friend sent us the following, from the pen of an unknown writer, which has in it so much of beauty and of truthfulness that it may do others good, as it did me:

"In his moral tillage God cultivates many flowers, seemingly only for their exquisite beauty and fragrance; for when bathed in soft sunshine they have burst into blossom, then the divine hand gathers them from the earthly fields,

to be kept in crystal vases in blessed mansions above. Thus little children lie—some in the sweet bud, some in fuller blossom; but never too early to make heaven fairer and sweeter with their immortal bloom.

"Verily, to the eye of faith nothing is fairer than the death of young children. Sight and sense indeed recoil from it. The flower that, like a breathing rose, filled heart and home with exquisite delight—alas! we are stricken with sore anguish to find its stem broken and the blossom gone. But unto faith, eagle-eyed beyond mental vision, and winged, to mount like the shining lark over the fading rainbow unto the blue heaven, even this is touchingly lovely.

"The child's earthly ministry was well done; for the rose does its work as grandly in blossom as the vine with its fruit. And having helped to sanctify and lift heavenward the very hearts that broke at its farewell, it has gone from this troublesome sphere, ere the winds chilled or the rains stained it, leaving the world it blessed and the skies through which it passed still sweet with its lingering fragrance, to its glory as an ever-unfolding flower in the blessed garden of God. Surely, prolonged life on earth hath no boon like this. For such mortal loveliness to put on immortality; to rise from the carnal with so

little memory of earth that the mother's cradle seemed to have been rocked in the house of 'many mansions;' to have no experience of a wearied mind and chilled affections, but from a child's arch-angelic intellect to be raptured as a blest babe through the gates of Paradise,—ah, this is better than to watch, as an old prophet, for the car of fire in the Valley of Jordan.

"Surely God is wise in all his works; and even amid our tears will we rejoice, in this harvest-feast, that among us, as elsewhere, he gathers so largely 'the flowers in their season.'

"And as of flowers, so of fruits in their order and after their kind, 'each cometh in his season.' Some fruits ripen early. Scarcely has the delicious June poured its full glory over the earth ere some rare and delicious species are already ripened. And some ripen later. There are trees that do not even blossom until midsummer; there are fruits that remain hard and unsavory until God shakes them in the wild autumnal wind, and treats them with the distressful ministry of frost. And so it is in the spiritual world—souls develop and mature differently. Some are ready for gathering at life's early Summer; some come not to the earing till the 'time of the latter rain.' And God

watches carefully that 'each shall come in his season.' We indeed talk of the 'untimely deaths' of young Christians, removed too early from spheres of usefulness, as if the omniscient husbandman did not know when his immortal grapes are purple, and his corn in the ear. Surely God does the whole thing wisely, gathering each spiritual growth just as it comes into condition for its immortal uses."

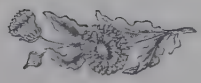
O, thought beautiful and comforting. Death is not destruction, but harvesting: the gathering from fields of mortal tillage ripe fruits in their season. And why, then, should our harvest-feast be sad over garnered immortality? Why should the sweetly tolling bell, filling the troubled earthy airs with a gentle sound, so startle and appall the trustful spirit? God strengthen your faith so as to behold this mysterious thing in a light from heaven, that its dark veil shall seem transparent, and a face with soft eyes shall look forth, loving and bright as the face of an angel.

No. Death is not destruction. Death is not even decay. Death is harvesting. Hear, ye parents, from whose households sweet children have been rudely parted, hear ye this: "The beloved has gone down into his garden to gather lilies." Ye children, who have lost revered

parents, and whose life is chilled in the shadow of that dread thing, orphanage, hear ye this: "As a shock of corn cometh in in his season, so shall matured souls be gathered in the garner of God."

O yes; my dear children and yours are only transplanted flowers. In the Summer-land of immortality they bloom, never to fade.

"Not lost! O no; not lost, nor dead.
Immortals can not die;
They only quit their crumbling cage,
For mansions in the sky.
Beyond the reach of tears and pain,
Where death hath lost its sting,
Within the realms of endless day,
They fold their weary wing."



Child-Life.

" Light to thy path, bright creature; I would charm
Thy being, if I could, that it might be
Ever as thou dreamest, and flow on,
Thus innocent and blissful, to heaven."

" 'T is granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The mind, impressible and soft with ease,
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clew
That education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong:
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong;
And without discipline the favored child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild."

IV.

Child-Life.

I AM now going to ask you to turn your thoughts from the child dead to the child living and moving about in this world. We need not forget the dear departed ones whom we have laid away in dreamless and unbroken sleep. Their memories are too precious to us ever to pass away from the recollection. But we know that our children dead are safe. Our children living are not free from danger, even with all the protection of parental love, and the hallowed influences of home to shield them.

The little child in your family may be pure and innocent to-day; but, alas! to-morrow the mark of sin may be on its soul, and as it grows up to manhood or womanhood it may be scarred all over with sin.

I have somewhere read of a famed artist, who in his youth conceived the idea of painting a picture of innocence. He therefore went to to the nursery, and made a sketch of a little child at its mother's knee in the attitude of prayer. It was a beautiful conception; and he wrought out the picture and placed it on the walls of his studio, and called it "Innocence." The years passed by, and the artist grew to be old; but ere he would put away his brush and pallet forever he desired to paint a picture of guilt. Then he went, not to the nursery, but to the prison; and there, on the floor of a gloomy cell, lay a wretched man in chains. His eyes glared, and he cursed all who came near him. The artist made his cartoon, wrought out his picture, and hung it beside the beautiful picture of "Innocence." So "Innocence" and "Guilt" hung side by side—the one in all its purity and sweetness, the other loathsome in its moral deformity. The legend affirms that they were paintings of the same person. The guilty wretch on the prison-floor in chains was once the innocent and beautiful child of the nursery repeating his evening prayer with uplifted hands, differentiated by time and sin.

And so it is: the child in your home to-day, pure and sweet as an angel, may be in the years

to come the wayward boy or girl—yes, the guilty criminal in the prison-cell. These are startling possibilities, and should move us to mighty exertions to rescue the innocent one from its possible perils.

I am a firm believer in the possibility of saving all, or nearly all, of the children. I say nearly all; for I have known some parents who were so judicious, good, and true, and yet whose children grew up so wayward and wicked, that I can not say *all.* There seem to be some cases of such entire moral perversion that one gets a very strong argument from them in support of the doctrine of total depravity. Then, I say *nearly all*—at least vastly more than are saved.

Let me now inquire, what is a child? If we may get the answer from the way so many people treat their children, then a child is a little living being who has by some means stumbled into existence. A being with a pair of feet to run in all sorts of paths, according to its own will; a being with a pair of hands to work good or evil, as it pleases; a being with a pair of eyes to see whatever sights come in its way, taking note many times of the inconsistencies of its elders; a pair of ears that gather up the sounds that fall upon them, flashing their im-

pressions home to the heart; a being for years subject to the will or caprices of its elders, whose influence may cause it to grow up to the perfection of manhood or womanly virtue, or which may burrow its way into the earth, and become earthly, sensual, devilish.

At the very basis of all education, moral and intellectual, there must be a proper understanding of child-nature, or child-life. Our business, as parents and teachers, is to take the child as it is, and shape its being. A child, then, is an ungrown, undeveloped man or woman. Let me illustrate: The little tree in your garden is only a couple of feet in height; it is held in the earth by only a few small and tender rootlets; its bark is thin and delicate; its branches are easily bent or broken. The winds could easily push it over, or a passing cart-wheel crush it. And yet our little tree is perfect in all its parts, from root to topmost branch. But it can not endure what the old tree, with rugged limb and deep root, can bear easily. You know this, and accordingly you guard that tree most carefully by an inclosure of some kind. You cover the earth about the roots with compost, to enrich the soil, thus at the same time protecting them from Winter's frosts and Summer's heat as well. You watch it, and think about it, and look

forward to the time when it will be full-grown, beautiful, and fruitful.

Sometimes the very young tree is gnarled and crooked. What now does the careful nurseryman do? Does he cast it aside to be burned? Or does he gather all the gnarled and crooked trees together and make an orchard of them, unsightly and useless? No. He takes the little tree and prunes it; he straightens the crooked places, scrapes off the diseased parts, takes special care of it, supports its tender stem and weak branches, with intelligent reference to the nature of the tree. By and by it becomes fully grown, and by its beauty and symmetry amply repays the husbandman for all the care he has bestowed upon it.

Like the little tree in the garden, the child in the family is very tender and susceptible. It is not very deep-rooted, as the thousands of little graves scattered over all the world abundantly attest. These little moral trees are very easily pushed over by the winds of disease or the wheels of harsh treatment and neglect. They are sensitive, the bark is easily abraded, the branches are readily bent, their powers of endurance are comparatively small; so they must be watched and protected, and receive the most constant and intelligent care.

But there are some gnarled and crooked children in this moral garden. What, I ask, is our duty toward them? Shall they be permitted to grow up in their perversity, dwarfed souls, a blot upon the age in which they live? Why not do with them as the gardener does with the little trees under his care? It is certain, however, that with the tree much depends upon the soil in which it is planted. It is equally true that much depends upon the home where the child-tree has taken root, and is destined to grow up.

I think, if you will carefully study the child, you will find that it possesses all the faculties of the full-grown man or woman. You will discover there memory, will, and judgment, though with less of strength than the adult possesses. The strongest of the three is usually the *will;* and it should be strong in child or adult, for it is the motive-power of being. All it needs is proper education. A weak engine in a ship would be no more deplorable than a weak will in a child. It is no disparagement if your child has a strong will; only train it. That *will*, in after-life, may carry its possessor over difficulties that otherwise would be insurmountable, and away from temptations that might prove damning.

Again, the child soon shows that it has the power of perception. The first time it opens its eyes it perceives something, and receives an impression. Then it begins to conceive ideas. Thought comes to its mind through the eye and ear. Thought is to the child's mind what food is to the stomach. The one stimulates the digestive organs, the other the mind's organs. These mental powers act on the thought, and new ideas are brain-born; ideas of relation, which come not of the senses. The child is a thinker, a reasoner, almost as soon as it begins to live.

> "Thoughts upon thoughts, a countless throng,
> Rush, bearing countless thoughts along."

The child grows to manhood as the years go by, and these thoughts become the principles and theories of the man—"the child is father of the man"—thoughts which rule empires, giving joy or sorrow to millions of mankind.

Furthermore, the child has a conscience, and it is naturally disposed to be religious. This moral determinative faculty is part and parcel of our nature. The child is therefore a perfect being as it comes from the hand of its Creator. It is a miniature man or woman. I have in my microscopical collection many pictures which are so infinitesimal that they are invisible to

the unassisted eye; but under the glass they are perfect and beautiful. Look at the child. It is little, almost nothing, in the estimation of many; but turn on it the glass of the Gospel, and it rises up into beautiful and perfect proportions. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Such is the estimate which Jesus places upon the little child.

The child is an imaginative being. Its little life is largely one of fancy. It *plays* school and visit; it converts a chair into a table, a chip into a dish, the window-sill into a piano, and a bunch of rags into a doll. It holds conversations with unseen companions, it assumes government over them, and in a thousand ways contrives to keep itself busy. Thus all these infantile activities are but the first outgoings of manhood and womanhood, the beginnings of real life.

The child's mind is also susceptible to all kinds of impressions. It has been compared to a clean sheet of paper to be written upon. And O, how sadly is the page spoiled sometimes by unskillful hands, and what fearful blots often mar and disfigure a whole life! Childhood is the time when the character is most easily warped or molded. It is then that the greatest acquire-

ments of the whole life are made. The first five or six years of every child's life are the most important of its whole being. Hence, we see the demand for wise and careful training—that which includes patience, forbearance, and love. Character of the better kind is of slow growth; but its beginning is in infancy. Precocity is to be dreaded. Too much brilliancy may soon go out in an eclipse. Bear with the little struggling soul. Help, with a smile and a kind word, the little pilgrim in its journey. Do not make the mistake of expecting that the little tender mind will go at one full bound up to the heights where you now stand. That summit is gained only step by step.

But I must again refer to my tree. A little tree in the garden may be very easily warped. That which was trim and beautiful may become crooked, and if left to grow up in that condition will be deformed through its whole life.

Nature has her laws and penalties, and they will be respected. The crimes of a boy may be the moral ruin of the man. We write our own histories, and preach our own funeral sermons.

"The rolling rock leaves its scratches on the mountain, the river its channel in the soil, the animal its bones in the stratum of rock, the fern and leaf their modest epitaphs in the coal.

The falling drop makes its sculpture in the sand or the stone. Not a foot steps into the snow, or along the ground, but prints in characters more or less lasting a map of its march. Every act of the man inscribes itself on the memories of his fellows, as well as in his own face. The air is full of sounds, the sky of tokens; the ground is all memoranda and signatures, and every object is covered over with hints which speak to the intelligent."

Little Things.

Not less surely do little things in a child's life influence its future. A blow undeserved, a cold turning away from its childish questions, a want of sympathy in its troubles, may send it away into solitude and grief with a wonder in its mind what life means, and for what purpose it was created. A child's trouble is not a small thing to its sensitive soul. It comes to you with tearful eyes, and a heart throbbing with distress, because of some little hurt, or the loss of a penny, or the breaking of a cherished toy. It is indeed a trifling thing to you, the mature man or woman; but to the little one it is an appalling disaster, a grief that beclouds the young soul, and hangs a dark curtain before the brightness of future days. And yet, because it

is so trifling an affair to you, you turn coldly away from the little grieved soul, to whom the sorrow seems intolerable. O, remember that the dear children need sympathy, just as much as you do when great waves of anguish sweep over your soul; and when the sympathy of friends comes into your heart it is balm to the wounds and healing to the sorrows.

I have somewhere read a story, in which is a lesson of value to parents and teachers. One of the Roman kings, in pursuing some of his military schemes, had occasion to cross the Adriatic Sea. No other opportunity occurring, he hired a simple boatman to row him across. In the midst of the sea a storm arose, and the boatman was alarmed, and relaxed his efforts. But the future emperor of Rome cried out, "Courage, my man, courage! you carry Cæsar and his fortunes."

O father, mother, teacher in the Sunday or day school, do you ever yield to discouragements because of the obstacles that surround you? Do not forget that in the mind of your child or pupil there is more than the fortunes of Cæsar. That little spirit is destined to live on and on, through all the years of God! Your hand and voice are giving direction to a soul which is to outlast twinkling star or blazing

sun. The mother molds the child; her hand shapes its destiny.

> "Like wax, she can mold it in the form she will;
> What she writes on the tablet remains there still.
> And an angel's work is not more high
> Than aiding to form one's destiny."

The great mistake of the world has been that the child has been too much overlooked and undervalued. There is a strong tendency in human nature generally to overlook little things, forgetting that law of the universe, that great things are made up of these. The grass, which carpets the earth in beauty, does not come forth in a moment by some fiat of the Creator; but it rises to the surface as gently as the coming of the morning—it comes up, blade by blade, till the hill-tops grow green in the soft Spring air, and the meadow smiles in verdant beauty. The rain, by which God brings the harvest, does not fall in a deluge upon the the thirsty ground; but drop by drop it comes on the mountain and valley, till the dry land becomes a pool, and in the desert there are springs of water. The great mountains, whose summits arrest the clouds in their course, have been built up grain by grain, and rock by rock, O, these little things! The nerve in the tooth, which is almost microscopic in its minuteness,

can yet cause your whole body to quiver with pain. So the mind of the child expands, little by little. Day added to day makes up life. pulse-throb by pulse-throb, we reach our three-score years and ten.

Patience.

The little child needs your patient care. Patience is one of the cardinal virtues of the household, and your little blue-eyed boy has been sent down to develop in you that virtue. The little fellow annoys you sometimes by his efforts to "live and learn." He wants to know what this strange world means, what it is for, and how to manage it. It looks pretty large in his little eyes; but there is a feeling in his baby-breast that he is equal to the emergency, and if he can have fair play he will master the situation, or die in the attempt. He does not mean to torment you, weary mother, but he does, or you make torment out of it; just as Christian people sometimes convert mere trials over into temptations, and that which God meant as a blessing becomes a curse. No; he does not even mean to try you. It is his way, that is all. He wakes you up before daybreak by jumping and frolicking; he wants to be dressed, and ready for business. He is afraid

the world will not go on right unless he looks after things himself. He thinks every thing in the universe was made for him, and he is about right. He wants something to eat, and can not wait very patiently for the clock hands to get round to a certain mark on the dial-plate; and then, before grace is half said, he utters an emphatic "Amen," to hurry up matters. He gets his hands into the batter, and then wipes them on his bib or your dress, whichever is most convenient. Your head aches, but his does not; and he is so hungry! He eats, and then starts out contentedly on a voyage of discovery. He finds your work-basket, which to him is a perfect curiosity-shop. He pushes your needles away down into the cushion, where neither he nor you can find them. He is studying the interior of the thing, taking his first lesson in geology. He unwinds your spools, and gets tangled in the threads. These tangled threads may be a prophecy of his future calling, when, as some great and learned divine, he may be called upon to unravel the tangled threads of theology. There are the the sharp, bright scissors, which he drops down into the register, greatly delighted to hear them go rattling away down the tin pipes. Your thimble he throws out of the window; the

button-box he empties on the floor, and getting down among them, fills his hands with the curious things, and wonders and wonders where they all came from, and who was so good as to make all these things for his amusement.

All this is trying to the mother's patience; but it is just the way the dear boy learns that a woman's work-basket generally has in it only a few select articles, and that they lie there in the most orderly manner! This is the process by which he learns that the inside of a pin-cushion is usually full of needles! and that every body, even a mischievous child, may get tangled with the affairs of this world sometimes. He learns in this way that the register-pipe is a good receptacle for scissors; for then he knows just where they are, and it will not be necessary for mamma to hunt a whole forenoon for them. When he threw the thimble out of the window and saw it roll away, he got his first lesson in distance and gravitation; while the button-box could only serve to impress him with the simplicity of the age into which he is happily born;

He must be active every moment, when he is awake. If he does not obey this dictum of his nature he will die, or lapse into idiocy.

Now, you have three things to do. Study his nature, direct his activities into the right channel, and bear with him. Some one has said: "If you put your child into a room full of ordinary matters, and do not give him an abundant supply of things which are his own, you need no more marvel that he should be mischievously busy, in touching what he ought not, than that he should eat what he ought not, when he is hungry, and you put him where he can get only improper viands."

Let the dear boy die, and then, as you look back upon his young life, you will wonder that you were ever impatient. Could you have him back again, to press once more to your heart, you would willingly suffer any thing for his sake. But he is gone, and, a bright cherub, he is safe inside the gates of heaven.

"Sweet, laughing child! The cottage-door
Stands free and open now;
But O, its sunshine gilds no more
The gladness of thy brow.
Thy merry step hath passed away;
Thy laughing sport is hushed for aye.

Thy mother by the fireside sits,
And listens for thy call;
And slowly, slowly, as she knits,
Her quiet tear-drops fall.
Her little hindering thing is gone,
And undisturbed she may work on."

Courage.

People often seem to forget that children are timid. Some are more so than others, it is true. The child is generally conscious of its weakness and need of support. But the mistake is often made of driving the little one to obedience by exciting its fears, telling it stories of "ghosts" and "hobgoblins" and "black-man." Charles Lamb puts on record the testimony that his whole life was marred by the foolish stories told him about ghosts and witches when he was a child. He says: "The night-time solitude and the dark were my hell. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh year of my age, so far as my memory serves things so long ago, without an assurance which realized its own prophecy of seeing some frightful specter." A similar experience had Jean Paul Richter. "From hearing ghost-stories around the fire-side," he says, "I went to bed, and lay with my head under the bedclothes, in a cold agony of fear of ghosts, and saw in the darkness the lightning from the cloudy heaven of spirits, and it seemed to me that man himself was spun round by spirit-worms."

Fear may be pushed so far in the mind of

a child as to unsettle reason, and drive it into idiocy. The wild shriek may be prolonged through all the years of its life. An eminent writer says: "Fear enfeebles and distorts the understanding more than all the other emotions of the mind; but terror, which is sudden or intensified fear, for the time paralyzes the understanding, and may even annihilate it altogether. One shock of terror may produce a state of mind which is ever afterward susceptible of the same agony; and from such a time fear is never absent."

It is a sad spectacle, in either the school or family, to see a timid child tormented with threats of punishment. And yet it is no uncommon thing for the little, bashful, distrustful child to be called up to recite a lesson, or do some other duty, and for it to be so overcome with a dread fear of the rod that its little frame will be shaken with nervous tremors. When children are timid, their fears must be dealt with in a cheerful manner. The child needs assurance, which comes from without and is based on experience. We protect our young trees from the winds by proper supports; but the tender children of our households are expected to grow up against innumerable odds, and come out safely at last. O, if people only

understood the children, what sin and wretchedness this world might be spared!

The very best remedy for timidity in the child's mind is knowledge. Ignorant people are generally cowardly, because they are superstitious. To cure your boy of "being afraid in the dark," do not put hickory on his back, but put knowledge into his head. A good book on science or history will infuse more courage of the genuine sort into a boy's mind than all the rattans in the world.

Then there is the detestable practice of scolding, which is quite too common. You may as well expect to improve the growth of a rose-bush by throwing stones at it as to bring up a child properly under the influence of a scolding tongue. If you want your children to be disregardful of what you say, just open your mouth like a hydrant, and let a stream of scolding run on their ears continually. The very best way to irritate the nerves, sour the temper, and make your child thoroughly hate home and you, is to scold it frequently; the surest way to make it bad is to scold it. We should talk to our children, and thus cultivate their reasoning powers. Thus may we make them an ornament to us, and a blessing to the world.

Mothers, I speak to you particularly; for the

destiny of the child is largely in your hands. Richter says, "Miserable indeed is the man for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable." Your life should be such that in after years your child can point to no word or act not becoming the relation you sustain. Thus will your memory be most precious.

"O heart, that fainteth underneath thy load
Of toil and care, along life's rugged road,
List to the gentle music, soft and sweet,
The music of the restless pattering feet.
'T is thine to lead them into pathways bright,
'T is thine to guide the little feet aright:
So let thy weary heart find sweet repose,
Thy toil and anxious care the Father knows."

There is nothing on earth so beautiful as the household on which love forever smiles, and where religion walks, a counselor and friend. No cloud can darken it; for its twin stars are centered in the soul. No storm can make it tremble; for it has a heavenly support and a heavenly anchorage. The home circle that is surrounded by such influences comes nearest the joys of heaven of any in this world.

If the mother has the responsibility, hers is also the deep joy of maternity, the bliss of giving to the world an immortal.

Children! They are a sacred happiness.

What gentle influences they shed! Their unconscious smiles and sweet tenderness have won many a soul from sin, and cheered many a despairing heart in life's rough journey. The only bright spot in the life of many a miserable, neglected, and ill-treated wife is her child. Its sweet presence is a daily benediction on her heart. The cloud that settles about her dwelling is spanned by this one beautiful rainbow. On that otherwise darkened soul this watch-light ever burns; and they who would tear from a mother's throbbing breast the child of her love commit by that act a horrid blasphemy against nature, and do violence to God's own decrees, by lifting away from that heart the consecrated instruments of its power.

Then make your child's life bright and joyous; consecrate it to the service of God, and ever give it the stimulus of a noble and pure example.

Child-Culture.

"I saw a tiny plant, in tender green,
Grow, leaf by leaf, till, robed in velvet sheen,
From out its heart there burst a blossom fair,
That shed its fragrance on the Summer air.

I saw a child, that by its mother knelt,
And prayed, 'Our Father.' Then and there it felt
The precious kindlings of a mighty love,
That drew its dawning infant thoughts above.

And one by one they went, the golden years;
The mother's spirit fled to radiant spheres;
But, with glad banner of the Cross unfurled,
Her child went forth a man, to bless the world."

V.

Child-Culture.

IF the child is, what I have stated it to be in the preceding chapter, an embodiment of all the affections and powers of the adult, existing in an undeveloped, but developing, stage, characterized by tenderness, sensitiveness, impressibility, then the question of its culture is one easily solved. It is the simplest problem before the mind of the Christian world this day.

I admit there is more to do in the training of a child than in the training of the little tree in the garden. The tree is passive in your hands—the child is active. But then the tree, on the other hand, can do nothing for itself—the child can do so much. The tree is shaped by the laws of vegetable life, has no will—no conscience. The child has a

life of its own, and this life is exhibited in its will and its conscience.

But, I say, the question of child-culture is a simple one. I do not mean by this that the child is simple. I should say, rather, its psychological organism is complex, but simple in a sense, because it can be understood by us; for we ourselves have been children, and know of the thoughts and feelings of childhood by our own experience. The most complex piece of machinery may be very simple to the practical mechanic, because he has studied its mechanism, though very complex to others. Each plant in the greenhouse, while obeying the general laws of vegetable growth, yet has a nature peculiar to itself, and needs care and culture accordingly. So must every individual child be studied. For example: some children need to be held back; their brains are too active, the nervous force is expended too rapidly. The brain literally consumes the body. Send such a child off into the country, away into quiet, and let its brain rest and its body grow strong. Take a plant out of the greenhouse into the field, and in less than a week it will begin to put on a different kind of growth and verdure. And what is true of a plant is equally true of a child. Take one of your sickly girls from the

crowded city in August, and let her climb the hills and roam through the valleys, and she will soon become as sprightly as a deer, and as fresh and rosy as June. Some one has said that a dose of good country air is better than all the medicines in the world.

The characteristic of another child is its acute sensitiveness. It will droop under a sharp word, like a delicate plant before a blazing fire. Another child is obstinate, and will be satisfied only when carrying out its own will.

Some children are naturally frolicsome. They go bounding about like rubber-balls, upsetting some things and breaking others, and teasing every body with whom they come in contact. Then there are the dull children, whose minds expand slowly. But give them time, and deal with them carefully — the mind that unfolds slowly may yet open and be brilliant. We are told in classic story of one Herodes, who, to overcome the extraordinary dullness of his son Atticus, educated along with him twenty-four little slaves of his own age, upon whom he bestowed the names of the Greek letters, so that young Atticus might be compelled to learn the alphabet as he played with his comrades.

But all children are not really dull who may seem to be so. The mind machinery is all

there, but in partial repose. And then, again, there is often a sub-current in the mind, not obvious to the gaze of the world:

> "The wealth of the ocean lies fathoms below
> The surface that sparkles above."

But what if your child does seem to be dull? I have seen it stated that Sir Isaac Newton, whose name is associated with the constellations, the discoverer of gravitation, was a dull boy. Sheridan, the orator and statesman, was pronounced by his teachers an "incorrigible dunce." His mother—and a mother generally looks upon her child with a feeling of charity—said he was "the most stupid of all her sons." Goldsmith, Shakespeare, Gibbon, and Dryden were all of them of an inferior standard of intelligence in their boyhood. When Berzelius, the great Swedish chemist, left the preparatory school for the university, he went bearing the credentials, "Indifferent in behavior, and of doubtful hope;" and when he was nineteen years old he was taunted by his classmates with the question whether he understood the difference between a laboratory and a kitchen. Sir Walter Scott had the unenviable reputation of owning the thickest skull in the school which he attended when a child. Milton and Swift

are said to have been dull boys. The celebrated divines, Scott and Clarke, who have won fame the world over for their learned commentaries on the Scriptures, were pronounced positively stupid in their youth, and were looked upon by their parents with but little hope for the future.

The fireside is the child's first seminary, and is of infinite importance in its life. It is the universal school of infancy; and the education there received is woven in with the very woof of its being, and gives form and color to the texture of its whole after-life.

And, furthermore, you can not tell just what your dear child may become. With what an utter disregard of what the world calls wealth, or position in society, our Heavenly Father scatters the priceless gifts of genius among his children! The great poet or preacher, the illustrious statesman or scientist, senator or President, is as likely to go forth from the humble dwelling of the day-laborer across the way as from the princely palaces of wealth and fashion. He who shall wear upon his brow a nation's honors, he whose voice shall hold and sway tens of thousands of his kind, may this day be unconsciously digging in some field, unnoticed and unknown by the great world. In your own quiet and simple home, in your Sunday-school class, dear teacher,

is some little boy, who may one day be a great and powerful man, whose words and deeds shall affect the destiny of millions of his race. Mother, teacher, is there any stimulus to your heart in that thought?

But that is not all. I do not approve of telling boys in the Sunday-school that they should be wise and good, for some of them may be called to positions of honor, such as Governor or President. This is a deplorable mistake. There are higher inducements than that to be good. Teach the boy to be a wise and good man, whether it be stone-mason, merchant, President, or any thing else.

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part—there all the honor lies."

The real object of our education is to give the young mind resources that will endure as long as life endures, to establish habits of thought and action that will run through its whole being. Education that will render sickness tolerable, solitude pleasant, and life itself dignified and useful, is the kind to be sought. No other culture is in accordance with the nature and demands of human existence. The education of the ball-room, "the last new novel"—the *world*, in short—will not do this,

because it does not meet the inevitable facts in the life of man.

In all religious training, the child should ever be taught the difference between a mere outward form of goodness and the genuine thing itself. A child that hears its mother tell her callers she is so glad to see them, and then, when they are well out of the gate, hears her say that she was annoyed with them; the boy who hears his father boast of how he took advantage of a neighbor in a bargain; children who hear their parents tell in prayer-meeting how much they love God, and then never hear a word addressed to him in prayer, or about him in conversation, at home, from one week to another—who in meeting talk of going to heaven, and then all through the week plunge deeper and deeper into the world,—such children have but little to encourage them in the development of real heart-goodness. That they perceive these inconsistencies, when they exist, is very certain.

Real goodness is in the heart, or it has no substance. It can not be counterfeited successfully. The culture of the little child must embrace this. It must be taught to be unselfish, generous, self-sacrificing, not for the purpose of winning applause, but because it is right to be

so. I am reminded of an Oriental tale, told by Lord Bacon, where a cat was changed into a lady, and behaved very lady-like, until a mouse ran through the room, when she sprang down upon her hands and chased it. So with children; if their goodness is only an outward thing, when temptations come they will down and follow them. Give them right notions and sound principles, and they will be firm. In after-life the waves of affliction or sin may beat around them, but they will stand serene amid them all,

"Firm as the surge-repelling rock."

It must be remembered that parental love does not preclude correction. The tenderest love may find expression in the rod—the rod as a last resort, however. The parent who will allow a child to drift off into wrong, without correction, is doing an injury which time can not repair. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The child that the parent truly loves should be corrected, if correction is needed. Government is an absolute necessity, and no family should be allowed to grow up in disregard of it. The young mind must be taught law and order as a first requisite.

Let the child be left unrestrained, undisci-

plined, and yet be surrounded by all manner of inducements to bad living. Let it grow up thus, fall into evil ways, commit criminal acts, and in process of time land in jail, then our concern for it begins; then we begin to talk about its training and discipline. But it is too late. The habits have become fixed, the character is formed, the criminal has been made, and reform is now at least doubtful. A man can not live his life backward. O, this letting a child get well under way toward absolute ruin before you take any decided steps to bring him up right! There is where so many fail. Many a parent has cried out, in bitterness of soul, "O, that I had begun earlier!"

Then, I say, begin earlier to shape the young tree in your nursery into usefulness and beauty. Remember that every day which passes by renders the chances of success less and less. Life can not be unlived, nor can habits once formed be easily uprooted.

"Too late! The curse of life! Could we but read
The thoughts that ever bleed,
How oft are found,
Engraven deep, those words of saddest sound,
Curse of our mortal State;
Too late! Too late!"

"Father," said an Indian chief to a missionary who had come among them, "You will find

among us many old men, like myself, whose opinions are too confirmed to be changed. They will assent to almost any view you may advance; but, when done, will remain unchanged at heart. Do not waste your time on such. But here are our children. Their minds are young and tender, and will receive any impression you may wish to make upon them. Take them, and raise them as you think best."

Dear parent, that bright-eyed boy, on whom you are bestowing your affections and lavishing your money, may either be a blessing or a curse to the world. He will be true or false; an honest man, moral, upright, and good, or given over to vice and its resulting degradation. Your sweet girl may be wrapped about with the beautiful mantle of innocence and virtue; or, vicious and depraved, will realize from whence she has fallen, and then her words may be:

"Once I was pure as the snow; but I fell,
Fell like the snow-flakes, from heaven to hell;
Fell, to be trampled as filth of the street;
Fell, to be scoffed, to be spit on, and beat;
Pleading, cursing, dreading to die,
Selling my soul to whoever would buy,
Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread;
Hating the living, and fearing the dead.
Merciful God! Have I fallen so low?
And yet I was once like the beautiful snow."

Which of these shall be the fate of your child? Time alone can give the answer. This I do know, however: much depends upon the early training you bestow. These little beginnings of wrong in our children must be watched most carefully: for on them depends all the great future of their lives.

The displacement of a little iron bolt no larger than your thumb may wreck a train of cars, and hang crape on a hundred doors. So a word spoken to your child at a proper time, and in a right manner, may save it from ruin of soul and body in after years.

A child starts from its mother's door and takes a few steps along the busy street, noticing the many objects which attract its attention, until it falls into the drifting current of humanity, and, borne onward, is soon lost to its home and its mother. It was charmed into forgetfulness by the many strange and beautiful sights which met its gaze, and the many sounds that fell on its ear. Thus many a youth ventures away from the home of virtue, out into the world of evil, and soon finds himself charmed and bewildered with enchanting scenes, crowded forward amid the bustling throng of humanity, with the certain doom of God's judgment hanging over him.

These, when once fully embarked in their downward career, are forever clamoring to be let alone—they do not wish to be interrupted in their course of folly. "There is a way which seemeth right unto them, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Lay your hand gently on the shoulder of that thoughtless young man, and that equally thoughtless young woman, in the ball-room; say to them, "This is but a flowery path to ruin;" and they will often turn upon you with the bitterest invective; they will charge you with interfering with their private rights. The way they have chosen "seemeth right unto them."

Go into yonder gilded saloon, and speak to that young man, as he raises the glass to his lips, and whisper to him: "Look not upon the wine when it is red;" "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" and he will be likely to revile you, and call you a bigot and a meddlesome body.

Go, stand at the door of the play-house, where are congregated the real pleasure-loving; tell them, as they enter, that their course is wrong, and that time thus spent is worse than wasted, and they will laugh you to scorn, and call you a fool.

Go, place yourself by that dark passage-way,

that carries a multitude down into the cellar, where all the night long the dice clatter and the cards are shuffled and the hard earnings are wasted. Tell these men they are going straight to destruction, and then beseech them, with the utmost tenderness, to turn away from the haunts of vice and come to the house of prayer, and they may heap curses on you. Not all will do this. Some will be touched, and can be thus won, even from the lowest degradation into which sin has plunged them.

> "Some word may lift the shadow from the past,
> So long by sin and bitter shame o'ercast,
> And show in early life some sunny spot
> Where still a mother's prayers are unforgot."

But the cry of the amusement-loving world is, "Let us alone."

God's prophets, in the olden times, were always a trouble to evil-doers. None are so blind as those whom sin hath blinded. The wandering child is lost because it moves on thoughtlessly with the crowd,—so our young men and women press onward with the multitude whose feet are swift to destruction.

It is always safe for us to make the certainties of life govern the uncertainties. We ought to prepare for what we know it will be our lot to pass through. While we can imagine a

thousand things which may or may not happen in our lives, there are yet some things which must occur. We must die. No one pleads ignorance of this. Therefore, in view of death, how ought we to live? If you were doomed to die next week, and your child were standing by your side, to receive words of counsel that should govern and shape its future life, would you advise that child to follow a course of crime? Surely, you would not. Would you, then, advise it to engage in whatever in your judgment would lead to crime? Most assuredly not. You would not admonish it to be miserly or selfish, for these would make it unhappy. If, then, theater-going, dancing, card-playing, and the like, are allurements to crime, is it safe in any case to encourage them? And who denies that these things do lead to vice? There is not one who reads this, who would not most solemnly counsel prayer, faith in God, holiness, and all other gifts and graces which are taught in Holy Writ.

It is proper here for me to allude to a common sin, that of gambling. There are some *games* that do not lead to gambling, while others do. I mention it, because your child must meet the temptation, sooner or later. Gambling does not often begin in the professional hall.

Its beginning is in the misapprehension of a moral principle. It is said that all error is perverted truth. So the innocent sport of childhood may be carried over to the side of wrong. Let two boys of tender years, in their playful mood, win from each other marbles in their game. Your brave boy, flushed with his victory, comes home to tell you of it. You take no notice of it, or you dismiss it from your mind as only a boyish prank, quite indicative of his skill and smartness.

Suppose that boy had come home and shown you a penny, which he had stolen from a playmate or from some one's money-drawer—*only a penny!* but how shocked your feelings would be! You would weep over him bitter tears, quite as bitter as though he had stolen a larger sum; for the amount of property involved is not the question in your mind, but the fact simply that your child has been guilty of theft.

Now, these boys are soon to be men, and they are even now laying the foundations of their future manhood, "The child is father of the man." The seed of morality or immorality is being sown in the heart-soil, and out of the heart proceed the issues of life.

Then, these playful children are learning a lesson of wrong; for it is as wrong to gamble

on a small scale as on a large one; it is as wrong for a boy to win a marble, and keep it as property acquired in the game, as for the professional gambler to fleece his verdant victim out of a thousand dollars at a faro-bank. It is the principle, not the quantity of property, with which we have to do. I have known Christian people to defend these simple winnings because of their littleness, not seeing how easy it is to warp the moral judgment of childhood, blunt its moral sensibilities, and lay the foundations of moral ruin, by thus giving it an impetus in the direction of professional gambling, starting the soul on a career that may end in a prison-cell or on the gallows.

At the very threshold of your child's life, teach it moral principle; for this determines its usefulness and happiness in after-life.

> "A pebble in the streamlet scant
> Has changed the course of many a river;
> The dew-drop on the baby-plant
> Has warped the giant oak forever."

Two young men sit down to a game of cards, to while away the evening hours. At first they do not bet; but soon the interest flags. They then playfully wager a supper, or a sleigh-ride, or a bottle of wine, or something else. This seems quite innocent to them; but they have

now started on the road to ruin. First, a so-called innocent game, then a simple bet, then more earnest playing and deeper betting, continued from evening to evening, from week to week, and month to month. Do they lose? it only makes them the more determined to win in the next game, and they play on. Winning stimulates the desire to win more, and gain larger sums. The morals are now fast degenerating; the sense of right is becoming extinct. Conscience is being "seared over, as with a hot iron." The hours which should be spent in the company of the good, in reading books that enrich the mind with thought, or in peaceful slumbers are devoted to the card-table and its kindred evils.

Many a young man has squandered the money of an employer, and gone to ruin, through the enticements of the gambling-table. A young man loses in this process, and becomes maddened, and then drinks to obliterate the sad recollections, and again plunges into vice, until character and all he should hold dear lie in hopeless ruin. You may see him in the prison, as he paces the narrow limits of his cell. The memory of all the past crowds upon his mind; visions of other days are before him, when he was respected, loved, and honored. He looks

wildly at you. Ask him the cause, he will tell you, the card-table, the wine-cup, and a lack of proper discipline in his childhood—these have sent him down.

But there is a young woman, the pride of some cheerful home, in whose face is the light of hope, and in whose step is the buoyancy of youth. She wins, by her purity and grace, some noble young man, whose life, like her own, is full of promise. The spell of love comes over them, and locks their two hearts into one. They enter upon life's journey, hand in hand. If they are careful, they may avoid the quicksands and dangerous places; but if not, their way will soon turn from the enchanted ground, where all is beauty and joy, to the deserts, where the air is heavy with poisonous vapors, and the deep caverns and fearful steeps make life a hard and joyless road.

They make a mistake. On New-Year's Day she puts on her table a bottle of wine; he makes the mistake of drinking it. To add to the interest of their meetings, they play at cards. They do not bet, nor drink, nor revel, nor profane; but it becomes a habit with them. She watches him with her love, and says to herself, "If he strays, I will win him back again;" or she thinks one so noble as he can

not do wrong. How little of human nature does she know! He too feels strong in his manliness, and boasts of his mastery over himself. Time passes away, ten or twenty years, and O how sad! Years of hopes blighted; years when the dense clouds of sorrow rarely parted for the sunlight of joy to gleam through them, only leaving the darkness and gloom the more impenetrable. O, those terrible years! How heavily they have dragged! What days of anguish! What nights of grief! What a strange, sad story they tell!

There sits, by her window yonder, a desolate woman. The fire that once flashed in her lustrous eye has gone out. The flush on her cheek, that once vied in beauty with the rose, has faded away. That voice, once so musical, only sings its plaintive song of grief. That step, once so elastic, is slow and measured. The past is unforgotten; the love, the hope, the promise, are yet all fresh in the mind. The manly step, the vow of fidelity, can not be lost in the dream-land of forgetfulness; nor can the bridal day, the congratulations of friends, and the few first years of wedded life ever fade out of the recollection. They remain there, a panorama of heaven hung up in hell!

Where is that once beautiful and happy girl?

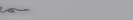
There she sits, pale, wan, haggard, and hopeless. And where is he who vowed to be true until death? Go, at the hour of midnight, to some drinking and gambling den, and you will find him there, "wasting his substance in riotous living."

Say not, the picture is overdrawn. Such instances are innumerable.

Then, parent and teacher, take some of your most precious time to your most precious work. The most important mission of your life is to save the child from its perils. You may have fewer acres of land, fewer stocks and bonds; but that matters nothing. You will be far happier while you do live, and far richer in your dying hour, if you have the consciousness ever of having done your duty by your children.

The Spiritual Nursery.

"My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray;
Yet ere we part one lesson I can leave you,
For every day:
Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things—not dream them all day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast forever,
One grand, sweet song."



"There is a land, of every land the pride,
Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside,
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
And milder moons imparadise the night;
A land of beauty, virtue, valor, truth,
Time-tutored age, and love-exalted youth.
. . . . . .
'Where shall that land, that spot of earth, be found?'
Art thou a man? a patriot? Look around!
O, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot thy home."

VI.

The Spiritual Nursery.

LET us now turn and look at this question of childhood and its culture in a still broader light.

I admit that the first thing to be considered in the matter is the safety and peace of the child—its personal salvation from sin and death; the next thing is to make it useful to the world morally. The Church, society, the State, the world, all have claims upon us, and upon our children.

It is one thing to train our young cadet in the military academy with reference to his own personal life, and another to make of him a good army officer; but the two go together. So these children in our families and our schools are to grow up to be common members of society. They are destined to take

the places of the men and women who are on the stage of life now. I ask, How shall they represent us? Shall the future be more glorious than the past, or shall it be less so? This question must be answered in one way or another; and the home, the Sunday-school, and the Christian Church must render the answer.

In looking over the list of institutions which every-where have foothold in civilized society, no one is more prominent than the Sunday-school, as it exists in this nineteenth century. And the importance which attaches to it, from any and every possible stand-point in which it may be viewed, is very great. The influence which it is exerting on the destiny of the world can scarcely be overestimated.

And this is exactly in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That systematic Sunday-school work did not begin earlier in the history of the Christian Church is quite surprising. Away back in Jewish times provision was made for educating the young in the "statutes and ordinances of the Lord." "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi, 7.) If

so much stress was laid upon child-teaching then, what is demanded of us in the superior light of this Christian age?

Viewing the Sunday-school as one of the gates within whose sacred inclosure there is safety to the child, I have a few things to say about it. What I may say may not be new; but still it needs to be said. My book would be incomplete without this chapter.

Sunday-schools began without the least idea on the part of their founder of the magnitude and grandeur of the work then and there inaugurated. The little rill, which trickles from beneath the rock on some mountain-side, is not a river; but, if you will follow it in its winding course onward, you will notice that it widens and deepens by virtue of the tributaries which flow into it perpetually, until it becomes a river, mighty in the onsweeping of its waters, a highway for the commerce of a nation, and on whose banks great cities, with teeming populations, are built. So with the Sunday-school: a few poor, wayward, and neglected children were picked up on the streets of an English city, by a philanthropic man. They were taken into a room, and instructed in secular as well as moral subjects.

What would have been the feelings of that good man, Robert Raikes, the recognized

founder of modern Sunday-schools, could he on that morning have cast his eyes down along the century to follow, and seen the Sabbath-schools as we see them to-day?

There are some hundreds of thousands of teachers devoting themselves to a work which would fill an angel's mind and stir an angel's heart. The Sunday-school teachers of the world are doing a work which, though to some it may seem quite insignificant, is far outreaching in its results, and they are doing it freely, "without money and without price," doing it as a pure labor of love. The number of children in all of these schools, throughout Christendom, can scarcely be ascertained; but it runs up into the millions. And the day has come when the Sunday-school is recognized as one of the most potent agencies in the make-up of the world's moral force, not to be dispensed with. The first and chief agency employed in the world's conversion is the pulpit. Preaching is the "power of God unto salvation." Next to that, I admit, comes the Sunday-school. The best auxiliary which the pulpit has is the Sunday-school; the real sub-pastors in the Church are the Sunday-school teachers.

The Sunday-school is not intended to be a place of ordinary secular instruction. Arithmetic,

grammar, geology, and similar studies, are ruled out. The teacher may use any one or all of these sciences to illustrate and enforce the "truth as it is in Jesus;" but all other instruction must be subordinate to the one single study, how to bring the child to the Savior. The Sunday-school is the spiritual nursery of the world. And here let me say that there is a necessity in selecting teachers for the Sunday-school who themselves understand the "way, the truth, and the life," experimentally. The qualifications which fit quite well for teaching in the week-day school are not adequate here. If it be a rightful demand, in these days, that he who preaches shall be one who has a personal experience of the power of Christ to save, not much less, if any, should it be demanded that they who sustain the relation of religious teachers to our children shall be living examples of what they teach. Mere secular learning, the scholarship of the schools, is not enough. Science, language, philosophy, art, without religion, will only make us strong, without making us good.

The Church of Christ is a spiritual body on earth. The Sunday-school is a component part of the Church, and therefore it is a spiritual organization. It exists to teach the pure Word

of God, just as certainly as the pulpit exists for that same object. "The world by wisdom knew not God." On this point the world has had ample experience.

Nations have existed where popular intelligence abounded in a high degree, but where true religion was a thing unknown. These nations had martial courage, considerable refinement, and great wealth: and yet they had no good foundation, on which to rest securely. Let any people be "without hope and without God in the world," and they are wanting in the one essential element of enduring national life. Egypt was once the "cradle of the arts;" to-day it is the most sunken of all the nations. Babylon, once the mighty mistress of the Orient, is gone. Rome carried her proud eagles over the world, a terror to the nations; Greece had her temples and groves, where wise men gathered about them their disciples; but where are all these nations now? It may be said of each one, as it was said of each of the patriarchs, in the brief biography of the Bible, "And he died also."

I write for Americans, and so wish to impress you somewhat, if I can, with the value of the Sunday-school, as an institution, to our common and beloved land, of which religion and education are the true foundation. The greatness of

any country is not to be gauged by the number of its square miles, or the density of its population. These are undoubtedly elements of greatness; but all can see plainly that there is sometimes weakness in size. A ship may be so large as to be unmanageable; a building may be so large as to be useless, and fall because it is too lofty. The Continent of Africa is as great in extent as our own, and it contains nearly one hundred millions of people; but in the scale of the nations it weighs nothing. China, with her uncounted hordes, is not to be thought of in comparison with the great Christian nations of the globe. So with Asia generally; its civilization is effete. Whatever glory it may once have had has indeed become dim. And yet these regions are unsurpassed in beauty and natural productiveness, the real source of national wealth. But the whole is stagnant; moral death reigns; a blight rests on all these lands. They worship gods of their own carving, and they have fallen under the curse of God because of sin.

The real glory of a nation lies not in its broad acres, not in its millions of people, but in its real *men* and *women;* in the virtue, intelligence, and religion of its people.

Turn now, and look at this great country of ours, stretching from ocean to ocean. See these

extended valleys, these wide-reaching plains, these lofty mountains, these majestic rivers, these beautiful lakes, these vast mines of wealth, this wonderful soil, and these extended forests; and yet all these existed for ages, unknown to the world. Men were here, scattered over all this vast continent, pursuing the wild beast, living in huts, clad in skins; but they were men not much elevated above the beasts they pursued in the chase. Had the Chinaman first discovered this new world, and through some golden gateway poured a flood of Chinese pagans upon these shores, then our country would only be a second China. Had some other unchristianized people pre-empted the soil of America, and here built their cities and temples, then would this fair land of ours this day be fast bound in chains of moral darkness. But then such unchristian people are not discoverers, in any great sense. Such a people were here once, and the ruins of their temples remain; but they have passed away.

I wish to impress upon the Sunday-school worker, and upon the Christian parent, the thought of the grandeur of our mission in this respect; for our work has to do with the foundation of the great Republic. Look at Asia, crowded with people. Asia has had her vast

armies, her renowned generals, her great cities, her philosophy, and her religion. Africa, too, that sunny land, had her cities, her industries, and her philosophies. But neither has had any durable life; they have slept on through the centuries. The China of the present day can not even repair the public works which old China had the skill and power to construct. The tendency of paganism is to crush out the moral life, and so destroy man's real power.

Western Europe was more progressive. The Anglo-Saxon has always had in his veins, somehow, a livelier blood. He lives in a more inspiring climate, or the type of his civilization is one which gives greater play to his powers. He has "sought out many inventions;" manufactured, grown in intellect and heart, and still grows in wealth and power. The Europeans are descendants of Japheth. The Bible says, "God shall enlarge Japheth; and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." The statement was not a decree, making the servitude of Canaan right or just; but rather a prophecy of a simple fact of history. Now, in the history of this human distribution, Japheth became the progenitor of all the tribes of Western Europe and Northern Asia, including the Armenians, Medes, Greeks,

and Thracians. So God has "enlarged Japheth." The Anglo-Saxon race proves it. The Yankee, his descendant, is conquering the world. He is literally "dwelling in the tents of Shem," occupying his cities and his houses, sending his steamships along Asiatic rivers, and making the solitudes of Asiatic plains alive with the scream of the locomotive. Thus is the Scripture fulfilled.

Europe, up to the time of the discovery of America, had tried almost every form of religion, while every school of philosophy had taught its doctrines. Society was quite godless, so much so that God's best image, *man*, was crushed to the earth beneath the heel of kingly power. But that discovery was the dawning of a new day in the world's life. It was like the second advent of Christ to the nations.

How strange that for so long a time this land of ours should be unknown to the Old World—a land of rich soil, vast rivers, broad lakes, mines of precious and useful metals, so that any vocation could be pursued with profit! The opening of such a door to the crowded population of the Eastern Continent, blinded by ignorance and fettered with superstition, was indeed an event of magnitude. It lighted up the horizon like a glorious sunrise after a dark night.

At a time when this continent was most needed, God opened its gateways, and the millions have rushed in to found an empire. Here the great battles of humanity have been fought, and here the mission of the Gospel is to be seen in its greatest power. Nowhere is there a more perfect freedom, and in no place on earth is education more widely diffused.

It is not enough that we should have wealth and culture, we must have virtue and religion. This is the grand arena where the great moral principles unfolded in the Word of God are to be triumphant over every form of false doctrine and false practice. God is to be loved because he is God, and man to be honored because he is created in the image of God.

There is danger that we shall become materialists, and recognize no force but that which comes of steam, no wealth but the gold of our coffers. There is an intoxication attending the acquisition of wealth greatly to be dreaded. Men become so eager in the chase that they forget God, and are lost to every noble quality of head and heart. Education is not enough. Knowledge is power, as well for evil as good. We may become a nation of splendid heathens, rich and cultivated, as beautiful and as cold as a mountain of ice glittering

in the sun. Our school-houses are public blessings; but without our Churches and Sunday-schools we should be as a ship without a rudder. Above eagle and lion and crescent, the Cross is to be the true heraldic sign of the regenerated nations. So "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."

The Sunday-school exists as a spiritual nursery of young souls, as a feeder to the Church; but that is not all. In this work it affects and influences the nation at large; yes, and the whole wide world, from equator to pole. To this land they are coming from all the world. We welcome all, and we must try to save all. In the work of redeeming the world the Sunday-school must play a most important part. They who are to be our future legislators, judges, Presidents, poets, ministers, and merchants, are this day in the Sunday-schools of the land. What would we say if schools were established everywhere, to teach burglary, counterfeiting, and kindred crimes? O, we should rise up in our might and abolish them forever. How much are we willing to do to sustain schools which teach truth instead of falsehood, virtue in place of vice, and religion instead of irreligion? Let us not forget that the men who have risen to

the highest positions in our country have been mostly those who have had the best early moral culture. The hope of the world lies largely in the education of the children. Then, by some means, let us draw every child into the Sunday-school that we possibly can. Teach them the principal truths of the Bible. Warn them against the evils which surround them in life. Inspire them with a love of country. Lead them to the Savior, who said, "Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The present great Sunday-school movement seems to be under the inspiration of the Almighty. God is in it. The mind of the nation is to be moved, and prepared for great future contests; for as a people we have not yet got beyond danger. I believe that in the future there are to be great battles for the right. We can easily look forward to a time when a hundred millions of people shall call this land their home. All nations, all languages, all customs, all political ideas, are seeking to root themselves in this soil. They are doing it now. The battle between infidelity, in many of its forms, and Christianity is growing fiercer every day. What is our hope? The Gospel, in the pulpit and in the Sunday-school. Here is to be raised

up a generation of Christian workers, who shall do valiant service for the Lord Jesus. And when the battle thickens and grows hot, and we look for the coming men and women, we shall see them on the distant hill-tops and along the valleys of America, coming in thousands, with open Bibles and warm hearts, God's army of occupation. "Occupy till I come." I hear them singing, as they march to victory:

"We 'll not give up the Bible,
God's holy book of truth,
The blessed staff of hoary age,
The guide of early youth."

And filling all this beautiful land, from ocean to ocean, the voice shall break forth:

"Our Father, God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King."

Christianity means child-culture, child-salvation. I close this chapter appropriately with an extract from the late Bishop Armitage, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, touching the child and the Church.

"I find," says he, "a child in no religion but in the religion of Jesus. Mohammed seemed

to know nothing about a child. The heathen seemed to know nothing about children in their mythology. Their gods were not born as children. They were never endowed with the attributes of children. They were never clothed with the sympathies of children. They never threw themselves into the socialties of children. They were gods of terror, gods of passion, gods of lust, gods of blood, gods of might; but they were never gods of helplessness, a span long. O no! That would not have been natural. That would not have been divine, in their conception. And hence they make no provision for children.

"But the great elemental fact of Christianity is the Holy Child Jesus. Born of a woman, born under the law, in total helplessness physically, laid in a manger, cared for by no man, but the child of the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. So that the Gospel of Jesus is the only religion on earth that makes provision for a child, and is the only religion in which a child is laid at the basis and foundation of its faith.

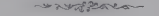
"The religion of Jesus is the only religion that dares to put its sacred books into the hands of a child. No other religion dares hazard its existence on such a venture as that. Sacred

books of Hinduism, sacred books of Mohammedanism, sacred books of any religion, put into the hands of its children, would shock its authors and its votaries. But the Christian religion brings its sacred books to the child. It says to the little one, 'They are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in the Lord Jesus;' and, although the child can not master their mysteries, he can believe their mysteries, he can obey their mysteries, he can elucidate their mysteries.

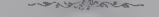
"The religion of Jesus is the only religion that boasts its noblest workmanship wrought in the spirit of a little child, and is better adapted to effect personal salvation in childhood than at any other period of life."

Children Saved.

"Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."



"A little theft, a small deceit,
Too often leads to more;
'T is hard at first, but tempts the feet,
As through an open door.
Just as the broadest rivers run
From small and distant springs,
The greatest crimes that men have done
Have grown from little things."



"If for a world a soul be lost,
Who can the loss supply?
More than a thousand worlds it cost
One single soul to buy."

VII.

Children Saved.

A VERY large number of the human family die in infancy or early childhood. In all places where the dead sleep, there are many little grassy mounds scattered about among the larger ones; but in just what proportion I have not at hand the means of knowing. Some have placed it as high as one-third of all.

It is a most comforting thought to those who have lost children, and they are many, to know that not one of all the millions of little ones that have died has ever gone down into the regions of the lost. The time was when some people — honestly enough, I have no doubt — believed that children of unconverted parents, dying in infancy, were lost. But that day has passed away, never to return again, let us hope.

The atonement, which Christ made for the sins of the world by his sufferings and death, included all the children. Whatever may be the tendencies of human nature to sin, tendencies growing out of an innate condition of the heart, unless there be a direct putting forth of *will* there is no guilt, there can be none. The child has not sinned, and therefore can not suffer any of the consequences of willful transgressions. So our dear departed children are in heaven — they are saved. Had they lived, they might have been lost to all good in this world, and lost in the next; but now that they have died they are saved to us forever. Then, dear mother, if you have ever had one moment's anxiety about your dear child's safety in the spirit-land, whither it has gone, dismiss that fear at once and forever. Look heavenward. Your child is safe "inside the gates."

But this is not a book on dogmatic theology, and therefore I turn from that phase of the subject. The title of this chapter implies just these few words, and I have said all I wish to say now on that point. I see your children growing up to manhood and womanhood, and it is my purpose to consider some things which relate to their safety in this world. Safety here will be safety there.

And now, please note this, that the moral culture of the child should begin in the earliest dawnings of its infant life. The day it begins to think and act, let its training for heaven commence. The first word the child hears, the first smile which greets its eye, have to do with its whole after-life. That infant mind will expand, that heart will feel, that soul will move about in this world. How shall it grow up—to vice or virtue?

Away yonder, on the Alleghany Mountains, there is a high and sharp, rocky ridge, which was once pointed out to me, in one of my Summer rambles, as the "Divider." "What do you mean by 'Divider?'" I remarked to my guide. "Why," said he, pointing to a sharp crest of the mountain on which we were standing, "a drop of rain falls on it, and is split in two—one-half bounds off to the west, finding its way into the Ohio River, and thence to the Mississippi, and at last reaches the Gulf of Mexico. The other half goes down into the Susquehanna River, thence flows away off into the Potomac, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean." The point was well made—possibly a little too fine, but true nevertheless, if not with the drop, yet true with the shower. No rain-shower ever falls on that ridge when

one part does not go to the Gulf of Mexico, and the other to the Chesapeake Bay.

In my native town there was an old house, which stood just where it served as a divider of waters. Whenever a shower fell on it, the roof on one side started the waters toward the Atlantic Ocean, and on the other toward the Pacific Ocean.

Too much stress can not be laid upon the early influence and teachings of home. It is the "dividing ridge," whence our children are started for heaven or hell. There is a turning-point in the life of every mortal, a time when the soul either goes up or down, turns to the right or the left; and such being simply a fact, let us make note of it, and use it in the interest of good government, and in the interest of true religion. A word fastened in a sure place may give direction to a life, and thus set in motion a train of good influences that will never cease. Dropped in faith, the sunshine of God's providence will take care of the germination of the good seed. Many a deed done, and word spoken, through the good spirit of the moment, are forgotten by us; but God always remembers to bless the precious seed sown in the heart-soil.

I have before in this book spoken of the little tree, by which to illustrate my meaning;

now let me make use of the bud. Have you ever noticed how wisely the great Author of nature has protected the buds on the trees and bushes? Examine them, and you will find in each and all vital germs, from which new branches, fruits, and flowers are to spring; and those germ-containing buds are protected by thick and firm scales, which ward off the cold winds and frosts, as in the olden times the shield, hung on the warrior's arm, warded off the arrows. So does God intend home to be a protection to the child. In every child there is a spiritual germ that must grow up to good or evil. Which?

The recollection of the home education of our childhood is never wholly obliterated from our minds. In the days of busy manhood or womanhood there may be a partial forgetfulness—things are stowed away somewhere in the chambers of the memory, as unseasonable goods in the store are packed away on remote shelves; but once in a while the merchant looks them all over, and when he comes to take invoice for his final "closing out" he brings forth and lays every thing on his counter. I once knew a very old man, who, just before he died, requested that his hands might be folded on his breast, and it was done. Then, with feeble

voice, he repeated that simple prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc.; and that first prayer of his infant life, taught him by his mother, was his last utterance on earth. I am reminded of that great and good man, Rev. Dr. Nott, who for a long time before he died was blind and childish. His wife, who was younger than he by several years, sat by his bedside day by day, and sang to him the songs of his childhood; and he was hushed to repose by them, as an infant on its pillow. She often sang to him that precious old cradle-song, "Hush, my dear; lie still and slumber," which always soothed him most. Think of that, my dear reader! a great dying college president, a man famous all over the Christian world, hushed into soft slumbers by a baby-song! O, it speaks to us of childhood and its recollections with a mighty voice! In his last days the brightest visions this good man had were those of his early home, while the name which came oftenest to his lips was the name of his mother. As with him, so with all of us: the training of childhood exerts an influence on all our after-years.

We must not forget this one general principle, *Develop the child from within outward.* The soul gives expression to the face. We

judge of people by the way they walk and talk and look. If a child be happy in spirit it will be brighter in countenance. The dull, sullen, and gloomy child, marred by its physical inheritance most likely, may be cheered up and made lively, and even brilliant, by the right kind of education in the home circle. But, to do this, you must plunge yourself into its peculiarity of imagination and feeling. The child's moral nature must be studied. No kind of instruction appeals more strongly to child-nature than that which is religious. Religious culture is the "tree of life," whose fruits, if they are first eaten, will render harmless and salutary the "tree of knowledge." Religion is the best conservator of life, and it rests primarily on the idea of God. That great idea must be presented to the young mind, not as a duty simply, but in such a way as to create a spontaneous love in the heart for God as a Father. A cheerful, sunny Christianity is the only one which can ever win the world's heart. Human nature loves the bright, the beautiful, the gladsome. That fact stares us in the face, go where we will, among savage or civilized races. It is part and parcel of the being whom God has made. And one of the best ways to banish all religion from the world would be to make it right harsh

and morose and dull, as some people do. Let the child know that love to God and man is not a mere sentiment, an abstraction, but an outgoing of duty and kindness. O, how mistaken are those Christian people who care only for happiness in their own hearts, whose religion consists in a sort of spiritual intoxication among themselves! They care but little for the great world, that watches for good deeds, and listens for kind words.

I would make emphatic that one word, *home*. It is a gate within whose sacred inclosure the most valuable lessons may be learned, and where the very best work of life may be done. Then take your child by the hand and lead it; it is not able to direct its own attention to these things; it needs your help in the unfoldings of its spiritual life, just as surely as the tottering babe needs the supporting hand of nurse or mother when it is learning to walk, or as the opening flower needs the sunshine. And if the little learner in the home school makes mistakes, does wrong, instead of heaping on it your bitter reproaches and blame, show it your pity, take it to your heart, give it your sympathy, speak words of encouragement, and thus be its guide and support as it steps toward the better life. Home is a gateway which opens into heaven.

These children, ranging from mere infants up to young men and women, have hearts to love the good, the true, and the beautiful. They have minds to grasp the great truths of nature and of life. They have capabilities for the greatest good, and scarce one of them but often feels the deep inspiration of his being.

Your children may have a fondness for mere personal charms, a relish for the outward attractions of life only; but that is a "fickle fancy." They are capable of better things. We must hold them in our thoughts, as having other tastes and desires as well, which they have not made known to us, possibly, or which have not yet been developed. There is a deep, strong current in every mind, that flows Godward. Look for it in the minds of your children. Seek its development, as a first duty you owe to the child.

In recounting some steps necessary to the welfare of the young, I would ask, Wherein lies the true value of life? What is the child's destiny? What are the chief and crowning ornaments of every life?

Every life has value. The young woman we meet on the streets is a loved and cherished inmate of some family, a daughter, a sister. And if so, then is she linked by strong ties to others.

She is looked upon by some father with only such feelings as a father can understand. Her mother sees in her her own image. Her step is but the echo of that mother's step as it was in the years long gone by, when she went forth in her girlish innocence and joy. In some brother's heart she lives in precious love. So I meet the young man, and the same thoughts come welling up in the mind. Whose son is he? Whence has he come? Whither is he drifting?

A Christian household is a beautiful place. The young man of noble worth and the young woman of virtuous life are indeed its jewels. Her song makes home melodious; her smile is a rainbow that arches grandly over the domestic altar; her word makes the heart beat quicker; her purity exalts home, and makes it more heavenly. His manly step has in it a courage-giving power, while his strong arm is a prophecy of future protection.

The young man has a mission; but it is not within his power to touch the home-life on all sides, as it is hers. He belongs rather to the outside world; she to the world within. He helps make the home; she softens and embellishes it. He fences in the plat of ground; she plants and rears the flowers, to sweeten the air

with their fragrance. He helps to lay the foundation of the home; she trains the tressy vine which clambers upon its walls. If there is any thing beautiful in this world, it is the home where innocent and joyous youth become the constant source of help and comfort to each other, and to venerable parents.

Have you seen the devoted daughter caring for a sick mother? Have you seen her pushing her way modestly through the crowd, to lead away a drunken father from his cups? Have you seen her, by her gentle love, winning back a straying brother? Have you seen the brave young man keeping the family together, and caring for a widowed mother? All these we have seen, and to see was to admire.

But these children of ours have another and a wider sphere in which they are destined to move. I mean this great world of society. And here, as in the home circle, their influence should be constantly exerted for good. But how can they be a blessing if they have been neglected? How can your child be useful to the world if you have allowed it to grow up in idleness? How can your girl be an ornament to society if she has never been taught much else besides being a fashionable belle? if she has been impressed with the idea that the only

way to charm others is to put on tinselry? False notions are cursing the world. In these days our young people are taught that life is mostly an amusement. The real solid discipline which develops genuine manhood and true womanhood is largely forgotten. There needs to be reform at this point every-where. Our young people need some amusement and recreation, I admit; but not less should we think of what is called the "hidden man of the heart," the "meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price."

The different spheres in which we move in life call out certain traits of character. The home sphere often develops selfishness between the different members of the same family. An only child is liable to be selfish. It has no competition. The family is hence a good place to cultivate unselfishness. Children should be taught to yield to each other's wishes and comfort always. The world never has any admiration for selfishness. In man, in woman, or in child, it only repels; on the other hand, unselfish serving exalts us. "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." A willingness to do for others is not only the highest expression of goodness, but the highest degree

of politeness. This is the power that wins the world. Of Christ's own unselfish death on the cross he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." All men admire the spirit that sacrifices its own ease for the good and comfort of others. But selfishness reverses this. The selfish young woman lives only for herself. The selfish young man seeks not the good of others, at home or abroad, and will as a result have fewer friends, be less an ornament to society, and will pass through life without doing any substantial good. Teach the child to devote itself to the good of others. Teach the young woman to cultivate what the Bible calls a "meek and quiet spirit." Therein lies the true beauty of life. Goodness is the brightest ornament any one, young or old, can wear.

And as home is the place where personal characteristics display themselves mostly, so pride and vanity show off more in general society. There are some young people who, at home, are rude, selfish, fretful, fault-finding, surly, dull, irritable, indifferent, and *lazy*, who never cast one ray of light on the home—the poison of home they are—who in society are all honey and beauty. They seem like angels, in their sweetness. But I am sure that it will take

more than wings to make angels of a good many young ladies in this world. It is the most difficult thing in the world to make falsehood appear in the garments of truth—to make white black, or black white. And when you endeavor to be what you are not, when you put on a character not your own, and which you do not really desire to be, else you would be, you are acting out a falsehood, and the world feels it, knows it, by a sort of moral intuition. Society reads you as it reads a book. If you wish to be thought good and true, be good and true. Be the pure gold, not the alloy of baser metal. Remember that we must all be tested by the trying ordeal of human judgment in this world, and by the judgment of God in the end. So teach the child.

But I wish to say something about destiny. Life is not a mere play, a dream, but it is a tremendous reality. The very thought of existing in this world takes in the idea of struggle, burden-bearing, and sorrows, which shall lie heavily on the heart. O, do we fully realize what life is? Have you thought, dear parent, of the hard and stony road your child may have to travel in the future, possibly with sore and bleeding feet, and what a sad and aching heart it may yet carry in its breast? I say it

not to discourage you, not to detract from the brightness of the picture hung up before you. I believe in crowding all the sunshine into life we can. But, then, there are some things we must meet, our children after us must meet, and it is best they should be forewarned. Your child is young now, and gay, and innocent; but time will bring wrinkled brow and faded cheek. Beauty of a certain kind will pass away; but purity and innocence, the higher beauty of soul, may remain forever. Dreams and visions become stern realities—poetry is converted into dull prose. The light becomes dim; Spring gives place to Autumn; the form stoops beneath the load of care. The gay and gleeful girl, who moves around your home to-day with fairy steps and ringing laugh, may yet lean upon her staff with trembling and feebleness. The picture I have sketched is in no way one whose realization is to be desired; but that does not alter the case. Our children are destined to bear heavy burdens, and pass through hard and trying scenes. These grow out of the conditions of life. They must be met and endured; for they are of God's providence, and they are needed for life's discipline.

If, then, these things be true—and who doubts them?—can you not see, as a parent,

that to cultivate in your children the sterner graces and virtues of life is your solemn religious duty? There is much they may learn now, which will come to their aid in the years to come. These burdens and sorrows of life, when they do come, will be alleviated somewhat by the preparation which they have received for them by your care.

We see around us the bright, the beautiful, the pure-hearted young women. What shall be the future of many of them? O, that I could draw the picture in lines of beauty, and that I could have it as we all desire! But facts are facts. Your child's life may be one of beauty, or it may be sadly marred. She may be the wife of some besotted and cruel drunkard. She may live to see the day when hunger shall pinch; her children may be clad in rags. Her life may be a burden, to drag her down, alone and neglected, weary and disheartened. She may go through a miserable existence, so unlike the promise of her young and hopeful girlhood. These things have been, and they will be so again. Such is life, in this world of sinful, fallen humanity. Would that it were otherwise!

But I do not forget that all lives are not joyless. There are many oases in the desert, many cups which overflow with joy. We must study

to make the best of life. To be good, to do good, is the true aim of life. "All things," even burdens and afflictions, "work together for our good." To battle bravely with the winds and tides of life is to be grandly heroic. They who make the very best of their condition, whatever it is, though it be one of poverty and lowliness, are the best examples of heroism in this world. This being true, it follows that life, however dark, is not lost. It is like the sun struggling through the clouds — there is light beyond.

I come now to speak of one point especially, in the matter of doing for the child just what the foregoing implies. Cultivate in your child's life the habit of Church-going. If the home and the Sunday-school are "gates," not less so is the Church. Why is it that in our Sabbath congregations ordinarily, anywhere in Christendom, so few children are seen? The child is dressed up and sent to Sunday-school, as if the Church service were of no particular consequence. And so the child grows up without the habit of attending Church. What is the result? A nation of young people who do not think of going to Church. There are young men and young women by the hundreds, in the families of this Christian land every-where, who

make the Sabbath a holiday, instead of a holy day. Parent, can you afford to allow your child to grow up disregardful of the claims of public worship? But you say, I have no pew in the church. Then, I say, get one. And if you do not fill it yourself, see to it that your girls and boys do. It is the pivotal center on which the child's life often turns. I have had an experience in my own family, in three different cases, and consequently I am prepared to affirm that in my opinion any ordinary child, of from five to six years old, can be trained to attend Church, and to be as still and quiet as a child ever ought to be during the hours of religious service.

Have you ever thought of the wonderful power of habit? Shakespeare, speaking of habit, said, "Keep a gamester from his dice, and a good student from his books, and it is wonderful." I have read many wonderful things of the power of habit over us. Once a young man was walking along the dusty highway on a bright Summer day, when suddenly his eye fell on a gold eagle lying before him. He picked it up and put it into his pocket, richer in gold by that much; and ever afterward he looked down, instead of up. He always saw the dusty road—never the blue skies and bright sun, and

the beauties above his head; ever afterward he crept in the dust, hunting gold eagles. It became the habit of his life. O, how sordid people may become by the force of habit!

There is an Eastern tale of a magician, who discovered by his incantations that the "philosopher's stone" lay on the bank of a certain river, but was unable to determine its exact locality. He therefore strolled along the bank with a piece of iron, to which he applied successively all the pebbles he found. As, one after another, they produced no change in the metal, he flung them into the river. At last he hit on the object of his search, and the iron became gold in his hand; but, alas! he had become so habituated to the movement that the real stone was involuntarily cast into the stream and forever lost.

Many a soul is saved through the influence of good habits. Johnson said: "The law of habit is the magistrate of a man's life. It is not the pilot directing the vessel; it is the vessel, abandoned to the force of the current, the influence of the tides, and the control of the winds."

If you desire the salvation of your children, guard their habits, help form them aright. Be a watchful sentinel at the home gate, the Sunday-school gate, the gateway of the grand temple

of holy worship. Hold the children by virtue of your authority, if in no other way, under these influences as long as you can, until their better nature has time to assert itself, or those good influences have time to mold their lives.

The possibility of early conversions is no longer a matter of question in the Christian world. It is not necessary that our children should grow up to be men and women before we may reasonably expect their spiritual regeneration. There are this day thousands in the Church who date their earliest religious impressions away back in the early days of childhood. Children, at five and seven, have often given the most satisfactory evidences of their adoption into the kingdom of Christ. I have some little Christians in my Church to-day, whose lives bear all the fruits of genuine Christianity: and on communion-day, among those who approach the altar, none are more welcome to the bread and wine than these same "babes in Christ." Our children should never be considered as being outside of the visible Church. Christ died for them. They should be consecrated to the Lord in their tender infancy. They should be taught the nature of prayer, and to pray; they should be instructed in the first principles of Christianity, sent to Sunday-school and taken to Church;

they should be impressed with the true idea of their relation to God and his Church. They should be led to understand that Christianity is more than a mere form. Let the "ax be laid at the root of the tree." Bear them to Christ, as needing a change of heart; lead them to seek his saving power in their hearts. And when they give these signs, enter their names on the records of the Church, as full members.

Our children should be born in the Church, live in it, die in it; and this is what I mean by Children Saved.

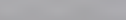
"Catch then, O catch, the transient hour,
Improve each moment as it flies;
Life's a short Summer, man a flower—
He dies; alas, how soon he dies!"

Children Lost.

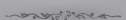
"THERE is no swerving from a right line that may not lead eternally astray."

"The living rock is worn by the diligent flow of the brook."

"For atoms must crowd upon atoms, ere crime groweth to be a giant."



"'T is fearful building upon any sin;
One mischief, entered, brings another in,
The second pulls a third, the third draws more,
And they for all the rest set ope the door;
Till custom takes away the judging sense,
That to offend we think it no offense."



"He who once sins, like him who slides on ice,
Goes swiftly down the slippery ways of vice;
Though conscience check him, yet, these rubs gone o'er,
He glides on smoothly, and looks back no more."

VIII.

Children Lost.

THE cars were speeding along at the rate of about thirty miles an hour, while we sat there in our grief. The world without was smiling in its beauty. The crowd of strangers about us knew not our sorrow; but I dare say the most of them had lost friends—perhaps children—and had they known of our loss they would have felt keenly for us.

Just one short month before we had gone over the same road, and, for aught I know, in the same coach. All was joy and hope then. But how changed the return trip! What a new aspect every thing wore now! At one of the stations I thought I would go out to the baggage-car, and see my dear child. O, to think of the sweet child away off among the trunks by herself in the baggage-car!

That was indeed hard to bear. But then I felt better about it, from the fact that when the box was raised up, at the depot from where we started, by a couple of strong men, I stood by, and asked the baggage-man if he would not please see that it was put some place by itself. I never saw that man before—I may never see him again in this world. I do not know his name, nor where he lives, but I shall not forget him. He took in all the feelings of my wounded heart. He spoke so kindly, he cared for my little box so tenderly. "Put it over here," he said to the men who lifted it up, "where it will not be touched." Dear man! Perhaps he had some little flaxen-headed girl at home waiting his return. He may have had my experience, and known how deep was my sorrow that day. He was tender of my feelings; that I know, for he cared so kindly for my little box.

At several of the stations I went out to see about my child. Once, when I stepped into the car, one of the train-men, a plain, rough, hard-working man, was sitting on the box, eating his lunch. At first I thought I would not disturb him; it could do no possible harm to me or the dear child. Besides, it was a very convenient place, and the hungry man needed his food. But then my feelings were very tender

toward that little box and its precious contents; and so I said to the man, "Won't you, please, sit somewhere else? That box contains the body of my child." Poor fellow! He had not thought about it. He rose up at once, and begged my pardon; said he did not know it, and seemed to feel as if he had done some great wrong. I told him it was all right now; it was only a matter of feeling. Then he said, "The box shall not be touched, sir, by any one; I'll take care of that." I took him by the hand and thanked him, and went back to my seat in the coach. Well, all I have to say is, that while a man's exterior may be very rough-looking, within there may be a very kindly soul. Perhaps he too had lost a dear child; if so, then he could know something of my sorrow.

We were sitting there, grieving, and doing what so many others have done, reproaching ourselves, or trying to do so. We thought over what we had done, and what we had not done, We saw where we might have done differently. Possibly, after all, we were only suffering a penalty for wrong treatment in some way. I felt as if I wanted to blame myself. If we had done this, or had not done that, our dear child might have been spared to us. I think some-

times people have reason to reproach themselves for neglects of duty toward their children. We could not call to mind any willful neglect, in any sense; all that we could think of was, that we might have done differently. Whether that would have made any difference in the outcome, only God knows. When people have done the very best they know how, though they have committed errors—"To err is human"—there is no just ground for any self-reproaching. Do the best you can, and leave the issues with God.

Just then the newsboy came along, and threw down some papers. I took one up, and almost instantly my eyes fell on the following account of death in high places. The incident shows how we are all related to each other, and how much of life we all have in common. The house of royalty mourned its dead. We, in our more humble walk, mourned our loss as much. The picking up of that paper at that moment seemed like a special providence. The words came like an angel whisper to two sorrowing hearts. I will here insert the article as it appeared, in full, for the good it may do others:

"The accompanying beautiful and pathetic poem, by the author of 'John Halifax, Gentleman,' was suggested by the fatal accident which recently befell the young

Prince Frederic William, son of Prince Louis, of Hesse, and the Princess Alice, daughter of Queen Victoria. The particulars of the accident are as follows: On Thursday, the 27th of May, the nurses brought three of the children into their mother's bedroom, in the Grand Ducal Palace at Darmstadt, about eight o'clock in the morning. One of them, Prince Ernest, who is four years and a half old, ran into the adjoining bath-room, the window of which was open. The mother hastened after this child, leaving the other two children, Princess Victoria, and Prince Frederic William aged three. She could not have been absent half a minute; but in that brief space of time the little one had got to the bedroom window. He leaned out, with childish curiosity, and let fall a toy with which he was playing, and in trying to recover it lost his balance and fell into the court. The noise of his fall recalled his terrified mother, but it was too late. The height from the window to the garden is about twenty four feet. When the little boy was picked up, it was found that he had no bones broken, but he had suffered a concussion of the brain. He did not recover consciousness, and died about eleven o'clock at night of the same day.

A LITTLE DEAD PRINCE.

(BURIED JUNE 1, 1873.)

"Over the happy mother's bed
Gambol three children, loving and gay;
Ernest strong, and delicate Fritz,
Pretty baby Victoria.
Two little princes, sans sword, sans crown,
One little princess, infant-sweet—
In the mother's heart, as rich and as full
As any mother's in lane or street,
They grow—three roses—love-rooted deep,
Filling with perfume all their own

The empty air, oft so sharp and keen,
Of the lonely heights too near a throne.
The palace windows stand open wide,
The harmless windows; and through them pass,
May winds, to the palace children dear
As to cottage babies upon the grass;
Out through the chamber runs Ernest bold;
The mother follows, with careful mind,
Fearless of fate, for a minute's space
Leaving the other two behind.
Grand on the bed, like a mimic queen,
Tiny Victoria gravely sits;
While, clasping closely his darling toy,
Up to the casement climbs merry Fritz;
It drops—his treasure! He leans and looks—
Twenty feet down to the stony road—
Hear'st thou that shriek from the mother's lips?
Hast thou no mercy, O God, O God?

One ghastly moment he hangs in air,
Like a half-fledged bird from the nest's edge thrown,
With innocent eyes of dumb surprise—
Then falls—and the brief young life is done.
. . . . . .

Mother, poor mother! try to see,
Not the skeleton hand that thrust him there
Out of sunshiny life into silent death,
But the waiting angels, in phalanx fair.

O, try to feel that the earth's hard breast
Was the bosom of God, which took him in—
God, who knows all things, to us unknown—
From sorrows, sicknesses, peril, or sin.
O hear, far off, the low sound of tears,
Dropping from many an eye like mine,
As we look at our living children sweet,
And our mother-hearts weep blood for thine.

God comfort thee! Under the robe of state
That hides, but heals not, wounds throbbing wild,
Mayst thou feel the touch of one soft dead hand—
The child that will always remain a child.
And when the long years shall have slipped away,
And gray hairs come, and thy pulse beats slow,
May one little face shine star-like out
O'er the dim descent that thy feet must go.
Mother, poor mother! 'neath warm June rain
Bear to the grave thy coffin small;
Oft children living are children lost;
But our children dead—ah, we keep them all!"

The two closing lines impressed me most:

"Oft children living are children lost;
But our children dead—ah, we keep them all!"

Then, I said to myself, my children are not lost.

As I rode along, through the two hundred miles and more, my mind was led out into varied reflections. Every-where in the world are scores and hundreds of lost young men and lost young women. The cities, the villages, and the country abound with them. They are not in perdition, but they are on the road that surely leads there. Many a mother has watched with anxious care over the crib of her sick babe by day and by night, and has prayed for its recovery with all the earnest pleadings of a mother's heart. She has seen it grow up to young manhood or womanhood, and then the sad day has come when she has seen that

daughter sold to sin—that son a drunkard, a thief, ay, a murderer. How true,

"Oft children living are children lost!"

That mother now cries, in her agony, O, if my child had only died in infancy!

The old doctrine, once taught in some of our Churches, that children dying in infancy are lost in the next world, has long since been exploded, never having had any foundation in either Scripture or reason. Nobody believes it now; but that children are lost in this world, growing up to maturity in sin, every body believes. The child that grows up uneducated in morals is liable to be lost in time and eternity. Who is to blame for the profanity one daily hears every-where? At whose door lies the sin of Sabbath-breaking, so common? Who is ready to answer for the wrong done to society by the theater, as it exists to-day in our country? Where rests the responsibility growing out of the gaming and dancing customs of the age? For these I hold to be only varieties of the same general species. There may be an innocent game, a harmless dance, a moral theater; but I ask, Do not these sports bear the young directly away from spiritual religion? Who questions it? Not one.

I have elsewhere in this book spoken of games and gambling; let me now speak of some of these other sins: dancing, theater-going, fashion, and intemperance.

Every-where we meet the crowds rushing, with a species of intoxication, into all the so-called "innocent amusements." But are they innocent? Perhaps dancing is the most so of any of the ordinary amusements of the day. If I can show that to be objectionable, then it follows that all others are more so. I am willing to admit that in the mere act of dancing there is no moral evil. A few children in the home parlor, keeping time to music, are not doing any harm; but *dancing* has a different meaning from that. A glass of brandy is not in itself bad. No evil inheres in matter. The harm comes from taking the brandy into the system in a wrong way; as a remedial agent, it may even be of service. So of the mere physical act of dancing. Exercise is wholesome—we need it; but we do not need the dance.

I wish to ask the abettors of the dance, Is a life devoted to worldly, carnal pleasure, as a chief end, in keeping with the claims of spiritual Christianity? Can you teach your child to pray for a clean heart, and at the same time encour-

age a life made up of every kind of amusement? Can you take your seat in the theater, and witness the plays usually put upon the stage, and at the same time feel that you are a dutiful and loving follower of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you attend dancing parties in the name of the Christ you profess to love? Can a Christian pray, "Help me to dance this evening?" Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Now, I most respectfully ask Christian parents, Can the light of true piety shine out of the ball-room? Is it not true that dancing is a species of revelry? And has it not in every age, when used as an amusement, tended only to draw the heart away from the love and service of God?

I know that some religious people see these things in a different light, and I am not disposed to impeach their honesty as Christians; but I write to show all who are in favor of opening the gates freely to every thing which the heart craves, that these customs are detrimental to a life of faith on the Son of God. I sincerely ask, Do you know of any who are devout, whose lives are especially marked as holy, who have any interest in dancing, theater-going and kindred amusements? There is nothing more

certain, to my mind, than that they are all at war with the religion of Jesus.

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

Nor was it ever designed to be at war with our needful pleasures. But we know that between the religion of the Bible and the popular amusements of the day there is an irrepressible conflict. I have said that as a mere worldly amusement dancing is as harmless as any; but the day your child becomes a true follower of the Savior the taste for the dance ceases; the day that a love of the dance takes possession of the heart the life and beauty of religion depart away out of the heart.

What, let me inquire, are the regular concomitants of the dance? Pride, prodigality, licentiousness, intemperance. These may not always be found in the private and select gathering; but they belong to the dance in its ordinary phase.

I admit it is an amusement, a pastime. But is time of so little value that it needs to be thrown away?

"Time destroyed
Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt."

I know, furthermore, that we need a degree of amusement; and there are those recreations

which are pure and intellectual, which can be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus. But let us not forget that life is more than an amusement. It is a grand and solemn reality.

The dance is fascinating. Satan understands just how to capture the imagination; and so the path of sin is often a gilded highway, where embellishments charm the eye and music entrances the ear, along which thousands rush headlong into pitfalls and ruin.

The celebrated Dr. Adam Clarke gave this as his experience: "I long resisted all solicitations of this kind of enjoyment; but at last I allowed myself to be overcome. I grew passionately fond of the dance. And now I lost the spirit of subordination, did not love work, was imbued with a spirit of idleness, and, in short, drank in all the brain-sickening effluvia of pleasure. Dancing and company took the place of reading and study. The authority of my parents was feared, but not respected, and few serious impressions could be made to prevail in a mind imbued with frivolity. Yet I entered no disreputable assembly, and in no case kept bad company. Nevertheless, dancing was to me a preventing influence, an unmixed moral evil. I consider it a branch of that worldly education which leads from things spiritual to things

carnal, from heaven to earth, from God to Satan. Let them plead for it who will, I know it to be evil, and only evil."

Some people labor under the delusion that dancing refines the manners, that it cultivates graceful motions. I ask, Can we distinguish, upon our streets or in our parlors, by their singularly perfect movements, those who have learned the art of dancing from those who have not? I submit: You send your sons and daughters to the dancing-master to acquire grace of motion; do you wish your child to equal or excel the teacher? Would you like to have your child adopt the vocation of the dancing-master? You would not feel that your family name had received any luster from having one of its members thus employed.

But I hear one say, "It is healthful, and therefore right." Who feels well after a night spent in the revelry of the dance, in the heated and foul atmosphere of a ball-room? It is not health-producing—it is the reverse. Not alone is it unhealthy to the body when excessively pursued, as it so often is, but it is unhealthy to the morals in innumerable instances, which is worse. Dr. Dio Lewis says: "Let a couple stand in the presence of company, with their arms about each other and their persons in

contact, as they do in these dances [round dances], and what should you think? The dance is made the excuse for what without it would be the grossest indelicacy." Again: "It is [with dancing] as with much of the opera, in which the fine music is made the apology for words that can not be spoken without it."

The Bible frequently speaks of the dance. It says, in one place, "There is a time to dance." Among the Jews dancing was purely a religious rite, and was only resorted to on occasions of great joy. After the overthrow of Pharaoh's army, Miriam, the prophetess, took a timbrel in her hand, "and the women went after her with timbrels and dances." They went through some sort of rite, expressive of their joy at the great victory achieved over their enemies. So the daughter of Jephthah met her father, and celebrated his victories with timbrel and dance. At the yearly feast in Shiloh the daughters of Israel "went forth in dances." Now, it will be noticed that on all of these occasions it was a religious observance, in which the women, "daughters of Israel," only took part. In all other cases the dancers were called "vain fellows." There are just three instances on record in the Bible of dancing as an amusement: First, that of the "vain

fellows" above alluded to, who perverted a religious rite, and who were devoid of shame. Secondly, those irreligious people spoken of in the Book of Job, who sent their children "forth to dance." Was it to dancing-schools? At least it is said that they went to destruction. Thirdly, the case of Herodias, whose daughter danced before Herod until she turned his head, and he promised her any thing she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. She was a good dancer. She must have been a very *refined* young lady; for when she made known her request, it was that she might have the head of a minister, John the Baptist, given to her. John was opposed to dancing and to all its associate evils, and did not hesitate to rebuke the sins of people in high places, even though it should cost him his head. Many another minister has incurred the hot displeasure of certain classes for denouncing their sins. I suppose it will be so till the end of time.

The dancing spoken of in the Bible, with the above noted exceptions, was not only always performed by the women—never by the sexes commingled—but it took place in the open field, and in the broad light of day. And if our young people would do the same at the present time, I do not know that even the most

zealous Methodist would care, for it is not the mere dance that is objected to, but the tendencies, the associations, the results to spiritual religion.

"A time to dance"—but when is that time? It can not be that God intended his people to gather together in the night-time and revel in the mazy whirl of the ball-room; for in all ages, and among all nations, these gatherings have been notoriously pernicious in their influence both upon health and morals. Besides, if this be a command, then it is a duty enjoined alike upon all, the old and the young, male and female. If so, then it is right for the minister and the member; and, inasmuch as he is appointed to be an example to his flock in all things that are proper and right, he should lead off, and himself be a real dancing-master! Yes, the Bible says, "A time to dance;" but it only means that there is a time when people do dance, just as there is a time when we are born, a time when we plant, and a time when we pluck up that which is planted.

The whole tendency of the dance is to lightness, frivolity, wrong; and they who give themselves up to it, or who encourage it in their children as the habit of their lives, only prepare the way, in a majority of cases, for those same

children to slide into other vices; and in this way are thousands of our Children Lost.

Then, let me add that dancing and fashion, in its objectionable sense, are inseparable from each other. People may be fashionable when the fashion is a good one. But the word is rather technical in its meaning, and signifies pride displayed in dress. And here is one of the evils of the world: a mere love of display. Good taste, neatness of attire, comfort, health, economy, are subjects which come legitimately under this head, but can not be dwelt upon at length here. Dress is a fine art, and has its law. Nobody of intelligence will deny that. The mind, as well as the moral nature, displays itself in the dress quite generally.

Religion does not require any particular pattern, nor any set color; yet some well-meaning people seem to think it does. They who decry all ornamentation and attempt to be "plain," and thereby advertise themselves as being very holy, generally get the credit of being bigoted and slovenly. They turn with intense satisfaction to the text which forbids, as they suppose, the "putting on of gold and costly apparel," when really all that the apostle meant was that *the* ornament of a woman should not be in these "outward adornments," but in a "meek and

quiet spirit." God loves the beautiful, and the whole universe attests it. Look at the fields in Summer. How rich! how fragrant! Look at bird and beast, and what ornamentation comes to view! So we may array ourselves becomingly, beautifully, without being in any sense extravagant or vain. There is a medium to be sought, a limit within which all is proper, beyond which all is improper. I plead for the former.

But I am opposed to this wretched and remorseless tyranny of fashion, the beck which brings down the millions of mankind to their knees. The sin is charged mostly to woman's account, because she is more acutely sensitive to form and color than man; but she is not alone. He follows the fashions as surely, if not as quickly and as enthusiastically, as she. It will be a glad day for the world when it learns just how to be neat, pretty, economical, and healthy in its apparel. But until it does, the thousands will bow their necks to the yoke, fortunes will be wasted, and time spent which might be more wisely employed. The love of dress, the desire to make a display, to rival or surpass some one else, has proved a snare to many a poor soul. Christ in the heart, formed the hope of glory, is the best counteractive for

this and all other evils. And so it do n't do much good for us to attempt to convert the hearts of mankind by stripping off their clothes; but let us set the world a good example of kindness, industry, patience, faith, charity, and lead people to embrace Christ. "Let the ax be laid at the root of the tree." Get the heart right, and then the dress will adjust itself, and never till then.

I have seen some professedly pious people who were not even clean. As between a little extravagance in dress and uncleanness, I think all must prefer the former. "Let all things be done decently, and in order." Avoid extremes on either side, and you will be about right.

I have elsewhere remarked that one of the concomitants of the dance is the theater. The young man or young woman who dances and dresses must of course see the "play." And the theater — which has been condemned by statesmen, philosophers, and divines, as a school of immorality, for two thousand five hundred years; the theater, which has not been reformed because it can not be, which exists to feed the lower tastes, and which thrives best on obscenity; which, though tried again and again, always fails when made pure; the theater, with its nakedness, its misrepresentations

of life, with its expensiveness, and all that—has its defenders in our Christian families quite frequently. And it is not uncommon for Christian men and women to go themselves, and take their children; and there, amid a boisterous crowd, stay until nearly midnight often. When will Christian people learn better? If these same people should happen to stumble into a prayer-meeting—not very likely, however, for they who love the one do not love the other; but if they should go to a prayer-meeting, they would be horrified if the services lasted a minute after nine o'clock. It would be so improper to be out after that hour!

But the theater attracts by its gaudiness, its hilarity, and its vulgarisms; and the sons and daughters of our homes go there only to be beguiled frequently into ways that are not good, and by and by we see them as Children Lost.

Still another vice belongs to this same category. Every-where we see the appalling evils of intemperance. O, how rum blasts and withers man or woman! Not so often as men are our women given to wine; but even a woman, in her native queenliness, sometimes becomes a drunkard. Among the possibilities of the life of the young woman who reads this may be drunkenness; for what has been may be again.

Rum is a monster that does not stop to distinguish the sex of his victim. He goes forth blind to human condition, insensible to mortal woe, and deaf to every call of pity. The monster gloats and thrives on the carcasses of his perishing victims. What cares he on what soil he puts his awful foot? What cares he about the wailings of human sorrow, or the agonies of despair? In palace or hovel, amid the blaze of chandeliers or in the dinginess of squalid poverty, he enters alike, only to crush out life, only to waste and kill. On one hand age lies helpless before him; on the other, youth, in its flush and beauty, falls, never to rise again. In one place the innocent child is consumed in fires worse than Moloch; in another, the strong man is smitten with a stroke that destroys every element of manly life. The monster can not tremble, for he never fears; he can not blush, for he is as heartless as the flinty rock; he can not feel, for he has no soul. His only mission is to slay guilty and innocent alike. O, if there is a foe whose steel would stab the vitals of the world, that foe is rum.

I have thought sometimes I could bear it if the woe ended with the drinker; but, alas! it does not. He, besotted and senseless, the nerveless maudlin, goes reeling through the

streets, and each staggering step makes the crimson of shame take a deeper hue on the cheek of wife and child. The raving rum-maniac comes to his own door, while his heavy footfall startles the ear of innocence within, as if it were the crash of death. He lies down on the floor in stupor, with every trace of manly nobleness effaced, while eyes are red with weeping, and hearts sore with their burning. O, I say, if the drunkard alone suffered, or the drunkard maker, it could be better endured; but wives and children are doomed to bear these ills from year to year.

A parent who puts wine on the table on New-Year's day, or a young woman who on that or any other day offers the glass to her gentlemen friends, tempts them to a life of drunkenness—sends a soul downward, whom woman, with her gentleness and virtue, should draw upward ever. And if you thus tempt the sons of other mothers, you need not blame those who tempt yours; for it is written, "With whatsoever measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Children Lost! Alas, it is too true. See them in crowds every-where—these hundreds of young men who know no Sabbath, because they will not. Sobriety and uprightness are

the exception; drinking, gambling, profanity, are the rule. There is a text here for a sermon to be preached in every home. Men and women must come to know that there must be reform—Christliness in every heart. There is a remedy for all these evils, if we only use it.

I have buried my children. They are safe from all these contaminations—lost to me now, gone from me for a time; but saved forever. We could all wish our children had not died; but, had they lived, we might have said, "Would to God that they had died in their infancy!"

Some one has said there are two ways of coming down from some high tower. One is to jump down, and the other is to come down by the steps. Both lead to the bottom. So, also, there are two ways of going to hell. One is to walk into it with your eyes open—few people do that—the other is to go down by the steps of little sins; and that way is only too common. Put up with a few little sins, and you will soon want a few more. Even a heathen could say, "Who ever was content with only one sin?" Thus your course will grow regularly worse every year. It has been said of the progress of sin in man: "First it

startles him, then it becomes pleasing, then easy, then delightful, then habitual, then confirmed. Then the man is impenitent, then obstinate, and then damned."

Never play with fire, my child; never play with sin, my man.

Life and its Lessons.

"Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood.
It is a great spirit and a busy heart.
The coward and the small in soul scarce do live.
One generous feeling, one great thought, one deed
Of good ere night, would make life longer seem
Than if each year might number a thousand days,
Spent as is this by nations of mankind.
We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

"The good man suffers but to gain,
And every virtue springs from pain;
As aromatic plants bestow
No spicy fragrance while they grow;
But, crushed or trodden to the ground,
Diffuse their balmy sweets around."

IX.

Life and its Lessons.

WHOEVER looks upon human life as any thing else than a struggle has a mistaken view of its meaning. Why is it so? The answer must be found in the deep-laid plans of the Creator of all things.

You and I, dear reader, have had our dark days, our heavy burdens, our crushing griefs, and our bereavements. Our hearts have been pained, wrung, and we have stood and looked up into blank space, and asked, Why?

Is there no explanation, no meaning to all this? Are we forever to stand gazing up into heaven, lost in amazement and wonder? Let us look around us, into ourselves, and perchance the explanation will be found, and we shall be able to find some

solid comfort, even in our trials and bereavements.

The Scriptures every-where tell us of the hard trials we must endure as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus, of the battles we must fight, and of the victories we may win.

This idea set forth in revelation has a very wide sweep. It belongs to nature, and therefore is God's idea. We are told that there is in space a universally resisting medium, that the planets in their orbits about the sun are urged forward against it. In the earth all around us there are evidences of this universal plan. The grass struggles up through a hardened soil, and the trees of the forest are made to raise their heads against the winds which would sweep them from their fastenings in the earth. And so in human life: whatever we gain, in substantial wealth or moral development, comes of toil and struggle.

The student of science walks not up some royal road, to wear unearned a crown in the grand temple; but he climbs the steep ascent, with oft rugged and dangerous declivities, and only gains the summit by the severest labors of the brain. The depths of philosophy do not open their hidden treasures to the casual observer, but to the mind which can bear the strain, and be

wakeful while others are sleeping. The fruitage of mind-harvest has its plowing and harrowing time, and its long days of patient waiting.

God has set many a treasure in the view of mortals, not to grasp with a careless hand in our life-journey, but to be gathered by the effort which brings the perspiration to the brow, and sends the heart into quicker pulsations.

And what is true of the toiling hand, and the toiling brain, is true also of the heart. There is such a thing as heart-struggle. The prize is held out to all, but given only "to him that overcometh." Every true life is one of growth, and the true goal of immortal being is perfection. "Go on even unto perfection." Not only so, but every true life is a warfare. Every human being born into our world is born to a life-contest with difficulties. Every human soul should bear aloft the banner inscribed with the words Battle and Victory.

Let us inquire here into some of the common impediments of life, not forgetting the fact that, while we are often on a seeming stand-still, we are actually making the greatest progress. We stumble at our difficulties, and deem them ill, but victory is what we are seeking rather than speed, strength rather than ease; and if we were not confronted and hindered by these impedi-

ments of life, we could not have the glorious privilege of overcoming them. It is the stormy sea that makes the skillful mariner. The fierce winds cause the trees to send down their roots all the deeper into the soil. A student bends over some knotty problem in mathematics for weary days, and possibly reproaches himself because he does not gain ground more rapidly. But the struggle with the difficulty is giving him intellectual strength. "To him that overcometh," cries the angel of success from the hill-tops of heaven, as he reaches out the crown to the overcomer, the winner in the battle of life.

To gain the full control of self is a first duty of every one. He who can, under all the peculiar trials of life, govern himself, is "better than he that taketh a city." Our self-government is imperative and possible. There is no success without it. No one who fails in this can be a winner in the world's contest. Anger must be subdued; patience must be cultivated at all times; avarice must give way to benevolence; selfishness must be replaced with a love as broad and deep as the ocean. One of the things we all must learn is the spirit of mutual forbearance. We must have in our hearts the charity that "suffereth long, and is kind." To

bear kindly with those who think differently from us is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to others. To be cool under provocations, to put a charitable meaning on the words of others, when "reviled to revile not again," to render good for evil, to love our enemies,—such are the duties which are implied in this self-government, and they are essential to our Christian growth and victory.

But how shall we win such a victory over ourselves? Not by our own unaided self always. We can do something in the way of self-cultivation. I do not believe that any one needs to be frenzied with anger. There is no reasonable excuse for it. If we have tempers, we still should be rational. To say that we committed such acts, or spoke such and such words, in a fit of anger, is a confession of weakness and of unreasonableness. If we feel the risings of anger, we should not let it overcome us. "Be ye angry, and sin not," is the divine prescription. If anger means displeasure, it may exist without sin. This is the meaning of God's anger. But most people, when they are angry, do sin. With them it is more than mere displeasure, it is the uprising of malignant passion. Another one says, "I did wrong, but I was tempted." We should not yield to temptation.

We should guard our steps, and turn away from the wrong, as we would from the hissing serpent. "Ah," says still another, "I am so avaricious by nature that I can not give away any thing." Then, I say, give away more, and break up that sad state of things by the sheer force of your will. When you do not want to give, be sure to do what you don't want to do, and thus gain a victory over self. Subdue yourself.

There are multitudes of professing Christians in the world, who are ever condemning themselves because they do not do better. Their mistake lies in charging every fault to their nature, thus hoping to escape responsibility. Their cry is, "Lord, why hast thou made me so?" Now, to all these I would say, kindly, You must overcome these tendencies. It will require an effort; but you must make the effort. Study your own weakness. See yourself in the light of God's Word; for unless you do put forth the effort you will come short, and your life will be one great moral blank. But then we all have the promise of help from on high. We should pray to our Heavenly Father to help us to be more generous, and then seek opportunities for the exercise of our generosity. We should pray the Father to keep us from getting

angry, and then be careful not to run into excitement. Our prayer should be, "Lead us not into temptation!" and then be sure not to go there of our own accord. The Creator did not design you to be a failure, but a grand success; and if you allow your tempers and trials to overcome you, then you thwart the plans of God. He has given these to us for our good. He intends us to become strong in a warfare with difficulties, else he would not have surrounded us with them.

There is a great deal of ignorance to overcome. We have every thing to learn. We are not accountable for any wrong we may do in ignorance. But if we are ignorant when the resources of light are abundant, we can not surely plead our ignorance in justification of our wrong-doings. To study the Word of God is one duty, to come into the experience of the Christian life is another. The best knowledge which we have is the experimental. To teach a boy how to swim, theoretically, would be a difficult task; he can only learn the art by plunging into the water. So we can all give directions how people ought to do under given circumstances; but they who have been placed there know best what is needed. He who has overcome a fault in his character, who has lived down and

completely mastered a bad appetite, who has changed over from sin to holiness, from selfishness to love, is he whose life and words have the greater force. There are those who claim to know all there is to be known, to have seen all there is worth seeing, and to be themselves the embodiment of all goodness and wisdom. Beware of them.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,"

and so is a little goodness.

Then, our weakness is to be overcome. Many a one holds back, does little, says very little, and is quite distrustful on account of a sense of littleness—weakness. This truly is a virtue in one sense; for it is said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." No man should "think of himself more highly than he ought to think." "Be not wise in your own conceits." But we should be cautious not to convert that which is a virtue over into a vice. There is often great danger that we shall do nothing because we can not do some great thing, and thus we may lose what power we have. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Our very weakness

is often our strength. A weak soul struggling against fearful odds has usually the sympathies of the wise and good on earth and in heaven. "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Moses, by obeying God, broke through the barriers of the sea, and escaped from the panoplied hosts of Egypt, by smiting the waters with a rod. So, if we obey God, and use our little prayers, with often simple and poor sentences, and speak our trembling words in human ears, though weak and ill-chosen, God will make them mightier than mailed hosts, and by them we shall lead many a soul through seas of trouble to the broad fields of heavenly delight. O, who is so weak as not to be able to do a little good in this world? Providence is not usually on the side of the greatest talents, but rather with those of the best hearts. He judges of us by our motives, not by our capacities. The brilliant shine with splendor, the strong achieve mighty deeds, the swift-footed dash out of sight; but the persevering ones, though slow and weak, often win the race. And in this world, where mortals have a race to run, a work to do, a battle to fight, the weak and timid often bear from thefield the wreath of the victor, the crown of the conqueror.

But there are enemies to conquer in this life-

battle—one grand enemy, in many divisions. The Scriptures speak of this enemy as the "world," the "flesh," and the "devil." The world represents all that which presents itself to the eye, the taste, the touch. We are to use the world; but it must be in a subordinate sense. This is the ladder on which we must mount to the skies. We should conquer it, and subject it to our good. From all that surrounds us, all there is beneath our feet or above our heads, we should receive discipline. Earth must pay tribute to heaven. The flesh—the appetites—that which belongs to the body, as well as the body itself, must be brought into subjection to Christ. We are to cleanse ourselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Religion means cleanness of soul and body. The Holy Spirit can not sanctify filth. Paul taught men to pray for a "heart sprinkled from an evil conscience," but he did not forget to add something about "bodies washed with pure water." That clause was thrown in, I think, for the benefit of some unwashed Christians among those Hebrews. These bodies must be conquered, our appetites must be reached. We must eat and drink to the glory of God, not from mere feelings of selfishness. The devil must be conquered. If not, he will conquer us.

Good or evil will be triumphant in the life of every mortal. Every soul will meet its reward of peace, or doom of despair. The devil, Satan, goeth about "like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Conquer him we may, we can, we must, if we would have the sweet fruition of the redeemed in heaven.

We hear those heavenly words, as they come to us from off the isle of Patmos: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in it a name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." These words were spoken not alone to the "Seven Churches," but to every struggling soul. The angel of the better life proclaims the message from the land of glory. Those words fall on the ear of the laboring man whose toil supports a dear, dependent family; they say, Toil on, for the promise is "to him that overcometh." To the student who trims his midnight lamp, and girds himself for the difficult hill of science, the angel calls, "To him that overcometh." To the struggling saint of God, when tempted, buffeted, tried as in a furnace, the voice comes from out the world invisible, saying, Struggle on, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." The loving

Father sees his dear children toiling up life's pilgrim way, but he lends a gracious hand, and makes the struggle a blessing.

There is indeed a sweetness in the victory we may gain. Every time we overcome any difficulty we take a step higher on the ladder of glory. When we tread beneath our feet some passion, or some temper, we are on our way to the skies. Whenever we gain a victory over Satan we make him weaker, while we obtain new strength ourselves for future conquests. Hereafter shall we see "heaven open," and then it will be that angels shall come and "minister unto us." They will feed us on "hidden manna."

The devout Jews held strongly to the tradition that the ark of the covenant, the tables of stone, Aaron's rod, the holy anointing oil, and the pot of manna were secretly hidden by their king when Jerusalem was captured by the Chaldean army, but that when the Messiah should come he would restore all these sacred objects, and they would ever remain the symbols of their power and glory. And so he does. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." All that has been lost by sin is brought back by Christ. He said he had bread to eat of which the world did not

know. So he feeds us on "hidden manna." O, the present sweetness there is in the victory of faith! "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The overcoming Lord is always in sympathy with the overcoming disciple. "I have overcome the world," said Jesus. We shall overcome it, too, if we are in Christ. The world, the flesh, the devil, were never conquered outright until Jesus met and mastered them, until he suffered and rose again from the grave the third day. That was the triumph of humanity over death and the grave, and because he lives we shall live also. Now, how beautiful the figure, "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The white stone, in ancient times, was a very significant symbol. It had the meaning of pardon, absolution, in Roman jurisprudence. When the judges cast white pebbles the culprit was acquitted; when they cast black ones he was condemned. So the white stone meant acquittal. God will acquit us if we have faith in Jesus, and if we are obedient to his law—if we "overcome."

The white stone was used among the Greeks in the celebrations of Olympic Games. He

who conquered sometimes received a white stone with his name inscribed on it, which made the owner a public ward, the guest of the nation, and his honor was loudly proclaimed. The conquering Christian shall have glory and honor, and be exalted to the right-hand of God.

The white stone was given as a token of admittance to feasts, and also as a ticket entitling the holder to receive rich and valuable presents in the public distributions of garments, gold, or grain. And again, it was given as a badge of friendship between individuals and families, binding them in an unbroken and perpetual alliance. In this case the stone was cut into two equal parts, on which each of the parties engraved his own name, and then they interchanged with each other. These were carefully preserved, and handed down to posterity in their respective families. This *tessera hospitalis*, like the custom of eating salt among the Arabs and Indians, was a bond of friendship that must not be broken.

To the Christian, how significant is the promise of the "white stone!" It signifies the pardon of sin, the witness of the Spirit, and eternal life. "I will give unto them eternal life." It signifies an heirship to the wealth of heaven, and shall be our passport to

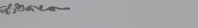
the glories of the upper kingdom. It admits us to the banquet of the King, and entitles the holder to the gifts of God. It means the friendship of heaven. Our Redeemer will recognize the token. We have his name; he ours. We represent him on the earth, bearing his image; he represents us in heaven, bearing our flesh. He binds himself to us so long as we are true to him. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Every true Christian is an overcomer, a victor. There is not one soul in heaven that has not gone up there a victor in some sense. All wear the chaplet of the conqueror. As the victorious chieftain comes home from war, and the streets of the city are thronged with multitudes who greet him with shouts of applause, so the angels of heaven greet the triumphant soul as it enters the gates of the New Jerusalem.

"Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign!
Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies,
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost."

Darkness and Light.

"WHO learns and learns, but acts not what he knows,
Is one who plows and plows, but never sows."



"When fain to learn we lean into the dark,
And grope to feel the floor of the abyss,
Or find the secret boundary lines which mark
Where soul and matter kiss.
Fair world! These puzzled souls of ours grow weak,
With beating their bruised wings against the rim
That bounds their utmost flying, when they seek
The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain, like birds against their wires;
Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond;
And what avails, if still to our desires
Those far-off gulfs respond?
Contentment comes not, therefore; still there lies
An outer distance when the first is hailed,
And still forever yawns before our eyes
An UTMOST—that is veiled."

X.

Darkness and Light.

WE often stand perplexed and appalled before the many dark problems which confront us at almost every step in life.

How much there is that is mysterious about us continually! Darkness, thick and gloomy, settles down on us, and we are bewildered. Shall it be so forever? Will the time ever come when these clouds shall vanish, when the mists will rise, and the sun shine out in all its glorious brightness on the soul? We wait, we hope, we trust.

I desire in this chapter to consider the subject of human knowledge. It has to do with our comfort and peace.

There are three main thoughts which at once present themselves to the mind. One relates to

the limitation of our knowledge in our present state, another to the subordination of that knowledge to the ends of virtue and individual development, and still another to the question of the future of our being. What shall we know hereafter, when we come into the realm of pure spirit-life? What shall be the nature and extent of our knowledge then? Of course, so vast a subject can only be glanced at in my limited space.

That upon all subjects which employ our faculties here we have but a partial knowledge is a truth which no one will call in question. Human society has been forming through these thousands of years, and in them all, from the days of Tubal Cain, "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron," down to the days of Tyndall, the mind has been actively delving into mysteries every-where, seeking after the grand arcana of nature; and yet how limited is that knowledge! how far we are from a perfect mastery in the realm of thought! I am not forgetful of the fact that the mind has gained much. Indeed, we often wonder at the great extent of human knowledge, for it is very great in the aggregate; but then who has perfect knowledge on any subject? The astronomers of the world can not tell us whether the nearest

planets are inhabited or not. The stars in the heavens no one can number on account of their multitude, and the only knowledge we have of them is expressed in a comparatively few simple statements. The air around and above us has its laws, and yet in only a few instances have we determined with any degree of accuracy the aerial currents. Our protection against storms might be quite complete if we knew enough. We know something of the globe on which we live; but only in a few places have mankind looked into its deep recesses. Who knows really any thing about the center of the earth? Chemistry has made known to us some of the laws which govern matter; but, compared with what it may yet teach us in its further unfoldings, all we have learned is no more than the alphabet of twenty-six letters, when compared to all the books in the English language.

What botanist can tell all about the vegetable world? Not one. What anatomist knows all about the human body? Not one. What geologist can tell all about the formations of rock which compose the earth's crust? Not one. We stand almost paralyzed before the infinity of science, before any single science. The naturalist will tell you that any one of the numerous insect tribe would constitute the study of a

man's whole life-time. The wing of a beetle can be fully comprehended only when we have mastered the whole science of mechanics. The animalculæ of a single drop of stagnant water may be studied for years without exhausting the subject. The sun has been flooding the valleys and frescoing the hill-tops of earth these ages, and yet we do not know really what light is—whether it is a mere vibration of some kind, or matter in its most attenuated form. We suppose the former. Before the growing flowers in our gardens, the mightiest intellect of man is confounded. No one can tell how they grow, nor by what strange law their petals are variegated with such exquisite beauty. How do these pigments reach their places, and blend in such delicate and beautiful shadings? Let him answer who can.

And so of the still more profound laws of our being. The wonderful power which sets this heart beating in our infant-life, and keeps it in motion day and night until we die in green old age, who can explain? How does the soul exist in this bodily framework? Where is its seat of power and energy? How is the body perpetuated from year to year? And so on. I might cover whole pages with questions which have never yet been answered by mortal. The

process of acquiring knowledge is like ascending some mountain-side. The higher we rise the wider becomes the range of our vision. The more we study the less we seem to know. To our minds the universe continually expands through deeper depths and wider fields of space. The mightiest telescope yet constructed has only looked into the vestibule of God's great temple. The grand arches and aisles and chancels will be seen only when this mortal shall have put on its immortality.

What do we know of spirit-life in the unseen world? Only a few intimations have been given us. There is an impenetrable veil which hides that land from this, and the whole world of humanity stands waiting for the curtain to rise. Every one looks over the river and wonders. A mystery hangs over the tomb; a silence that almost oppresses us rests on the place of the dead. No voice speaks to us audibly out of the deep eternity. Millions are ever asking, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Scarcely one doubts it—perhaps not one.

We often lose sight of the fact that we know so little in our exultations over what we do know, whereas there should be in us a profound humility that our knowledge is so circumscribed; and yet with that humility we may

cherish a desire to know all things. Our knowledge of the universe in which we live is fittingly compared to looking at objects in a glass. We see images, dim and shadowy, of things in heaven and things in earth; but often only images. Nothing is seen in perfection. We behold the outlines, the forms, and these only. It was well said, "Now we see through a glass darkly." O, the invisible world!

The knowledge which the world possesses has come slowly. The powers or forces of nature should have been better understood ages ago. That they were not is because men have been so sordid, selfish, brutish. And consequently we have not been able to grapple with nature, whose secrets are so deeply hidden. Then, too, the limited knowledge we have is apparent in the fact that we are always rectifying our mistakes. New discoveries are being made constantly. The machines we use to-day will be superseded by other and better ones a few years hence. That which satisfies us now will fail to satisfy us by and by. Laws are made this year, to be repealed next. Society outgrows its old bounds in every place. The present generation laughs at the generations gone by; and we in turn will be laughed at for our frailties, no less than our follies.

But I have spoken of the subordination of our knowledge to the ends of virtue and of development. It is most evident that we are put here for a purpose which has reference to ourselves. It does not seem reasonable to suppose that our Heavenly Father needed man, as he is on this earth, for His own glory alone. He could have peopled this globe with angels robed in garments of light and beauty. Nor do I believe it was for the earth, to make it beautiful and good, that man was placed here; for God had power to make the earth as beautiful as heaven is declared to be, and to keep it so forever. I conclude, hence, that man's own good was the chief end, and that end his development in intellectual power and in moral goodness, and therefore that his knowledge should contribute to his virtue. Let us see. Why does knowledge not flow into the mind, as water flows into natural depressions? Why was not the whole universe so planned that, when the child is born into the world, some battery having thought-giving power should charge it to fullness of wisdom by a single touch? Why are we not born, like Minerva in classic story, from the brain of some great Jupiter, in full development? I can furnish an answer to this question, if to no other. God

did not so plan our being. A higher and more glorious end was to be subserved in our creation.

We come into life with every thing to learn. Jesus, on the human side of his nature, "grew in wisdom and stature." We may easily see that whatever nature has in her storehouse is under lock and key; but the guardian angel gives us the key, and bids us open and enter. There is positively nothing hid from the grasp of the mind, in its ultimate mastery. There is not a principle which will not yet be made plain. The bottom of the sea may yet be photographed. A telescope can be made, and will be, capable of solving all the problems of the starry world. The mind of man is equal to the comprehension of all science, if unlimited time be given. And that dim outline on which we look to-day will grow ever brighter, until all things shall be revealed, even the deep things of eternity.

But this gathering of strength is not without toil. Do we need valuable minerals for our use? they are confined far down in the earth, where man must burrow his way to obtain them. Why were they not strewn over the earth, to be merely picked up? Then we should not have had the development of strength

which the seeking gives us, nor the cultivation of wisdom and prudence acquired in the search. For ages God said, Behold my lightning playing on the clouds, use it. Man looked, wondered, and waited, until gradually, after many trials, he found out its use. Why did not the Lord put up the telegraph-poles just where he knew they would be needed, and stretch on them the wire, by the "word of his power," ready for our use, as he surely could have done? He left it for us to discover the metal, learn how to draw the wire, find out the non-conductor, ascertain the mode of generating electricity, and the art of applying it to our use, because of the benefit it is for us to determine, by our own mental actions, these great principles of nature. And so of all that concerns us. Activity is demanded—it is a law of our being. Where one word of God could have directed us to the greatest blessings of life, we are left to toil and build through the weary years; then to tear down what we have built, and build over again. He says to all men, "Toil on." He bids us think our way through mazes of difficulties, and grope our way out into light through deepest darkness. The human spirit, in these struggles, might almost complain at its hard lot, did we not know that in this activity of

brain and hand the Father has some plan whose workings shall bring good to human nature.

> "Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
> The clouds ye so much dread
> Are big with mercy, and shall break
> In blessings on your head."

All these disappointments of our life, these reverses which we meet, these sad bereavements we call disasters—they are not such—should not always be looked at from the dark side; for they are only the stony road to the hill of ascension. They lead to our Olivet, where we receive our glory.

Why has not the Father made all spiritual truth unmistakably plain at a glance. I answer, For the same reason that he has veiled in mystery the truths of the outward world of matter. He will have us think constantly, patiently, and by the thinking grow stronger. The injunction is laid upon us to "search the Scriptures," rather than merely to read them carelessly. They are deep, and only to the searcher comes the mine of their wealth. But, lest we miss of heaven, he has made the essential part so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." The sea is so vast and deep that mighty ships are borne upon its bosom, and yet it spreads out its waters on the shores

so shallow that a child may wade into it. And so the Word of God has depths for the strongest intellect, and yet comes down to the comprehension of a child.

Then we see that our knowledge of nature, of God, of ourselves—in short, of all things—is subordinated to our goodness. The active arm is strongest—the used eye sees best. Our physical organization demands activity as a condition of health. People who go through the world without feeling the thrill of thought, the mere drones of life, are violating the first laws of their being. I believe that many are sick because their minds are too inactive. Health means the right use of all our powers. The body needs the stimulus of the mind; that is its normal relation. Labor, whether of head or hand or heart, not only develops us in point of power, but it promotes virtue. Who, I ask, commit the crimes which fester in society? Who are the men who plunder, and plot destruction? Not the hardy sons of toil, who feel that it is God-like to earn their bread by the "sweat of their brow." Not the men and women whose thoughts dwell on the great truths which God has stored up in the universe. Not they whose hearts beat with love for humanity. Not those who are ever expectant of

the glories which shall be revealed. No; but the idlers by the wayside of life. Thinking is a virtuous act.

But by this condition of our being, that demands toil, that sends men climbing the mountains, delving into the earth after its concealed treasures, patiently thinking out the problems of life, discovering the unseen, making life's reckonings beneath cloudy skies, as the ship rolls and heaves in its voyage, does God thus speak our destiny? I answer, Yes. The universe was made for thoughtful beings, such as we. This mighty volume is spread out for us to read, to understand. The wisest man who walks the earth this hour is only in the infant-school of God, learning the simplest lessons. But his mission is to learn on. He is to be advanced to sublime heights of knowledge in the future of his being. The world is yet to be unfolded to the mind of the race. There is not a truth of matter, or of spirit, which is not yet to be known. The mission of the human intellect, in this world even, is to know all things pertaining to the world, to understand every mystery, to have control of every force, and to use for its own advancement every substance which God has made. There are yet to be discoveries in science of which we have not at

present even the remotest conception. Nor will the earth be destroyed until this grand mission of humanity is fulfilled; for in the beginning God gave man "dominion" over the sea, the air, and the earth, with power to "multiply and replenish and subdue the earth." Then, too, in this all-conquering effort, men shall rise to higher virtue. This wonderful elevation will ennoble the heart of the race, and thus the very earth itself contribute to our redemption, all things working together for our good.

But what about the knowledge we shall have in the future! A little while ago I was speaking of the limitation of our knowledge in the present life, and I tried to show that the wisest of mankind know comparatively little, that all we do know is expressed by the words of an apostle as seeing "through a glass darkly." And yet there is another side to be viewed. The human mind is most wonderful in its powers. When I say that a map has been constructed of the bottom of the sea, where light has not even penetrated, and which no eye has seen but the eye of the Omniscient One; when I state that the metallic substances which enter into the composition of a star, so distant from us that a ray of light, traveling through space at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand

miles in a second of time, will not reach us in some hundreds of years, can yet be told with accuracy; when I state that mathematical science can point out the precise moment when the shadow of an eclipse fell on the Pyramids of Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs; when these things are viewed as mere indications of the powers of the mind now, we naturally ask, What will be the future of the intellect when these dull bodies, that now hamper and fetter us, shall be thrown off? When, in pure spiritual life, we stand in eternity, "then shall we know, even as also we are known." The deep mysteries that now perplex these understandings shall vanish away, as the frost melts in the morning sun. The problems over which our brains have fairly reeled in their efforts shall be as clear as day. The earth, the sky, the highest heavens, all shall lie open before our gaze. Light shall flash on the soul from the throne of the Eternal. "The Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." No object shall be too minute for our inspection: that which the physical eye can not see now—the invisible—the soul's eye shall yet see. We look up into space, and, lo, what majesty appears in those myriad stars! I have fancied it was in the night season, on the shores of Tiberias,

when Jesus, pointing up to these stars, said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" as if he had said, "All these are mine." We look with wonder on them now; we shall yet visit them. We look through the astronomer's glass, and far out in space, so far that no arithmetic can express the distance so that we shall comprehend it. Yet on the wings of our spirits we shall go out into these fields, farther than any telescope has power to reach. We shall visit every room in God's great palace; for "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." We shall read the past history of the universe, as it is written in lines of light all over the worlds. Thought will be as free to roam as the sun-ray is free in its passage through ethereal spaces. "Then shall we know, even as also we are known." Every science shall be mastered in the mind-life of every redeemed soul. Every principle of the universe, whether of matter or spirit, shall be fully understood.

The only depth which will remain unfathomed, and unfathomable, will be that of Infinity. The finite shall never fully know the Infinite; and yet into that sea of Infinite Being the soul will sink its plummet of thought deeper and deeper, without ever the possibility

of touching the depth of the Great Unsearchable.

> "Touching the Almighty, we can not find Him out."

We all think much about the heaven to which we are journeying. How we have all looked away toward a land of rest, where the shadows will never fall in their gloom, where the spirit will never pine, where the soul shall dwell in purest light, and drink from perennial fountains the "water of life!" But where is heaven? This I shall consider elsewhere in this book. Now we have only to do with that life as it concerns our knowledge.

How mysterious to us have been the ways of Providence in this world! How we have wondered at the dealings of God to man! Who has not seen the husband separated from the embrace of a loving wife, the child from the parent, and parent from child? We can not call it chance or fate; we call it Providence. But, as we have looked on the stricken wife and the fatherless children, we have said, Why is an event so sad permitted in a world over which a holy and wise God rules? And while we have looked and wondered and pitied, the thought has come to us, "Then shall I know, even as also I am known." Ah, our knowledge shall

extend through fields greater and more wonderful than mere science. It shall take in its sweep a wider range, that of immortal destinies and the ways of God. We shall understand the mysteries of redemption, which the angels desired to look into, and were not able, because they could not experience redeeming grace. How we have wondered at the mysterious plan of salvation, the shedding of blood for human sin, the sufferings of Christ, the strange union of divinity with humanity, and the resurrection of the dead. O how wonderful! Yet all these shall be plain to us when we appear before God in the upper kingdom.

And then, how often has the question been asked, Shall we know each other in heaven? Who can doubt it? We shall see the Lord of glory, face to face; we shall behold patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, of whom we have read. We shall see them; we shall hold sweet converse with them—yes, and know them. Surely, we shall know each other there, even better than we do in this life. It can not be that we shall know less there than we do here. There are those there this day whom we love, who walk in white. They are before the throne of God; they wait, fondly wait for our coming. Shall we know them—

they us? Vain question. The husband and wife, long parted, shall meet each other; the parent and child shall join in happy spiritual union. Friends long separated from each other shall reunite, in bonds never more to be broken.

We can afford to toil up the steep ascent, the rugged cliffs of life. We can afford to fight heroically on every battle-field of the flesh, for the winning day will come. We can afford to wait patiently for the morning of our true life, for its coming bringeth joy. We can afford to labor hard in the search after our true wealth; for its finding is certain, and its value untold. God has bottled thy tears. He has numbered thy sighs and counted all thy sorrows, and thy labors are not lost. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Now poor, then rich; now ignorant, then wise; now sick, then well; now bound, then free; now in darkness, then in light. Here mortal, there immortal; here weak, there strong; here in danger, there in safety.

In the words of that eminent lady, Hannah More, I close this chapter:

"Here my best thoughts are stained with guilt and fear;
But love and pardon shall be perfect there.

Here my best duties are defiled with sin;
There all is ease without and peace within.
Here feeble faith supplies my only light;
There faith and hope are swallowed up of sight.
Here things, as in a glass, are darkly shown;
There I shall know as clearly as I 'm known.
Here error clouds the will and dims the sight;
There all is knowledge, purity, and light.
Here, so imperfect is this mortal state,
If blest myself, I mourn some other's fate;
At every human woe I here repine;
The joy of every saint shall there be mine.
Here on no promised good can I depend;
But there the Rock of Ages is my friend.
Here, if some sudden joy delight inspire,
The dread to lose it damps the rising fire;
But there, whatever good the soul employ,
The thought that 't is eternal crowns the joy."

The Silver Lining.

"All is of God! If he but wave his hand
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! he looks back from the departing cloud.
Angels of life and death alike are his;
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er.
Who then would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door?"

"O God omnipotent! who in me wrought
This conscious world, whose ever-growing orb,
When the dead past shall all in time absorb,
Will be but as begun—O, of thine own,
Give of the holy light that veils thy throne,
That darkness be not mine, to take my place
Beyond the reach of light, a blot in space!
So may this wondrous life, from sin made free,
Reflect thy love for aye, and to thy glory be."

XI.

The Silver Lining.

IT was a severe trial to my feelings to lay away the forms of my dear children in the grave, and to know that they must decay, to know that I could never see them again until I too entered the Summer land of immortality, that the little precious bodies must dissolve back into original elements and disappear. It was quite hard to think of those little, and once sensitive, bodies as being away off in the cemetery, under the snows of Winter. No affectionate parent ever yet went through this experience without feeling the keenness of the grief; and no intelligent and trustful one ever did this without feeling, after all, that it was God's plan, and therefore was right and best.

"I murmur not; I know that thou
In righteousness hast worked thy will;
Beneath thy chastening hand I bow,
And trust thee as my refuge still."

The question with us is not what the Infinite Father might have done, but what he has done, in arranging things for his children in this world.

I think it was La Place, the great French mathematician, who irreverently said that if God had consulted him when he made the universe, he could at least have offered him some good suggestions. Well, possibly, after all, he was as much entitled to the merit of frankness as chargeable with the sin of blasphemy; for I find, from my observations of human nature, very often the existence of these same feelings in others, only that they are differently expressed. Indeed, there are very few of us who have not at times felt, if we have not given expression to, the murmuring spirit—we, too, would have things otherwise than they are. What father buries his child away from his sight without wishing it were otherwise?

But let me direct your thoughts for a moment to this world, in which we "live, move, and have our being." I am frank to admit that I would not have constructed the earth as it is. Mark you, I do not say I could have made a

better one. But then, would I have made the earth with such extremes of heat and cold? Would I have wrapped one portion in perpetual snow and ice, and another in belts of almost unendurable heat? Would I have spread out vast deserts of sand and rock, mocking at the life of man and beast? Would I have set the earth itself into tremors with pent-up forces within, often making the habitations of mankind a desolation by the outbursting of volcanic fires? Would I have so placed the earth in space as to make one-half of the year in one latitude a cheerless Winter, enrobing every thing in the garments of at least seeming death, while in another portion the people should be doomed to swelter in unabating tropical heat? Would I have sent men digging into the earth thousands of feet, to find the articles needful for human comfort and use? Would I have sent men climbing the mountain heights and braving ocean dangers, to hold companionship, or carry on necessary trade with each other? Take it to yourself. Would you have destined mankind to be the slaves of toil, and the helpless victims of disease and death? Would you have sent the widow forth to battle lone-handed with the hardships of life? O no. Left to you and me, dear reader, the world would

have been very different from what we now find it.

But then, let us remember that we would have constructed things with reference only to the present. God has made them in view of the future, and for the good of all. We would have planned for our ease and selfishness. God has planned for the spiritual development of his children in "the life that now is, and in that which is to come." We would have made the world, as man makes every thing else, full of contradictions and mistakes. He has made it on a model as far above our thoughts as he, the Infinite himself, is above us in the attributes of his glorious being. He has placed us here, amid icy poles and burning tropics, to burrow in the mountain side and battle with the angry billows. He has put us where earthquakes rock, and where tempests beat, and where destruction wastes and pestilences walk, and where the stricken tree-bough drops, and where the subtile poison lurks in the cup of the beautiful flower, where sickness blanches the cheek of youth, and death palsies the arm of the strong man. He has placed us where Winter wraps us in his chilly mantle, where frozen fetters bind the energies of man, and where Summer heats scorch and blister and kill, until the very

earth at times seems to call in the ear of God with a cry of distress.

But then, these very conditions point us to some more congenial clime, some "better land." These all point to a life not measured, nor yet measurable, with the years of our present life. Nature is ever pointing us to something beyond. We need something which this world is too poor, alas! to give us. It will not do for us, then, to charge God with folly; to lay on his works the little rule of our feeble judgment, and say, Why hast thou done this? or, Why hast thou made us so? It is well that over all the universe one Supreme Mind has sway; that all things were made and are upheld by one whose wisdom and love equal his power.

I went to my dear child's grave in the early Spring, and, as I sat there musing, the beautiful words of Solomon came to my mind with much comfort: "For, lo, the Winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." As I sat there by my dead, and thought of the present and the future, of death

and of the resurrection, I was impressed with these beautiful words. Their spiritual meaning came up in my mind, and gave the cloud a beautiful lining of silvery brightness.

Solomon wrote of Palestine, where the Winters have in them nothing of the severity which is peculiar to this cold climate of ours. There the Winters were, rather, "rainy seasons," with snow occasionally in small quantities. Only on the lofty mountain peak was it ever abundant. "The rain is over and gone," meant that Winter was past, and that Summer had once more come, with its warm breath, over all the land. Palestine was a land of flowers. They grew so abundantly, and were so rich and variegated, that they gave the face of the country a peculiar and charming tint. "The flowers appear on the earth," meant that beautiful Summer had come with its cheer.

God has sent his birds every-where. As a sort of living pendulum, they swing with the sun from north to south, and south to north again. In every land these heralds of sunny days, these forerunning messengers of the harvest-time, the musicians of nature, make vocal hill and dale, grove and garden, forest and meadow, with hymns of praise which the Great Father hears and accepts. "The time of the

singing of birds is come." And then that plaintive cooing of the turtle-dove had a peculiar and thrilling significance. It was the unfailing sign of harvest, and gave assurance of God's goodness in sending promised blessings of fruitful fields. "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Then was the time for the buds to burst, and the blossoms to open in all their beauty and richness, and send their fragrance on the passing breeze. Then was the time for the fruit to form on the pendent boughs, and grow to lusciousness in figs, in grapes; in our land, in apples, pears, plums, peaches, cherries. "The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."

No one can fail to appreciate the coming of Summer. How sweet and cheery, how buoyant and hopeful, is Summer! and how impatient we become as she seems to linger, while the cold winds blow from the north, and the clouds hang in heavy, somber masses in the sky, and the buds seem to shrivel, and birds hide away in nook and cranny, and we sit, with closed doors and crackling fires, wearied with indoor life! And is it to be wondered at that people sigh for Summer breezes and

sunshine, rippling waters and the melody of birds?

But this impatient nature of ours soon tires of the sun-ray, the long, hot days, the dry and sultry atmosphere, and the dust, which, in spite of all our modern improvements, will creep through every crevice, insinuating its unwelcome presence into every drawer, which soils the clean linen, settles without leave or license on every shelf, covers the gilt of the mirror, and tarnishes your purest china—I say, this impatient human nature, that becomes so weary of Winter, with its damp and snow and cold, is soon equally wearied with dryness, dust, and heat. The pleasure-seeker complains of the shower which spoils the evening drive, and the farmer murmurs at the "dry spell" that threatens his crops. We all sit in our heated chambers, fanning ourselves, and panting, and sighing for some cooler place. What an unsatisfied thing human nature is! If it never rained until all were agreed as to time, place, and quantity, the earth would parch. It would not be possible, with our present constitutions, for even God to create a climate to please every body. Some prefer Winter's cold, others luxuriate in Summer's heat.

We should remember that our Heavenly

Father has not consulted the tastes and wishes of any one class of persons, but has arranged the universe so as to subserve the greatest good of the greatest number; and often the present seeming good of the individual is lost in the greater good of the whole. It is better that one should suffer than many.

The coming of Summer, after a long and tedious Winter, must always impress upon our minds one thought in particular; namely, that of God's providential care over the world, and over us. Look out on the earth in Winter-time, when the snows are on the ground, when the leaves are off the trees, and not one green blade of grass is seen in all the earth about us, and the earth itself is frozen, and the chill blast sweeps and howls, and the gardens and fields are desolate. Did we not know that this is one of nature's methods, we would turn away tearfully, as from her funeral pyre.

But we know, by our experience and observation, that this dead shall live again; that these boughs shall put forth their leaves and blossoms; that these branches shall bear fruit in the season which God has appointed. We know there is a power in nature, a vital force, which may be suspended without being extinct—a power we can best see in its effects.

Now, sitting here by the grave, in the soft days of the beautiful Spring, I am led to think of these ways of God. There are evidences all around us in our life of an unseen intelligent power, a power which glows in the sun, sparkles in the diamond, throbs in the wave-pulse of the mighty ocean, blooms in the rose, flashes in the lightning's gleam! yes, a power which comes to us, moves in our life, governs our being, consoles us in the time of our troubles, quickens our spiritual natures, feeds us, cheers us, and draws us heavenward, as the sun draws up the green grass to carpet the earth when the snows are gone. That power is God, our Heavenly Father. He is in all things.

He who can make the grass spring out of the hardened soil, and cause the roots to send forth their stalks, and the boughs their foliage and fruits, he can raise us up also to a new life. He can take our feet out of the "horrible pit" of sin, and place them on the Rock of Ages. He can make our lives radiant. There is a power at work in human hearts to make them bloom in the beauty of spiritual Summer, just as surely as there is a sun which dissolves the snows or chases away the darkness of night. There is a power which comes to enrobe us in garments of the true life. The ever-blessed

Gospel of Jesus, which tells of the resurrection of the dead and the immortality of the soul, is the Summer-time of the great world's cycle.

But the coming forth of Summer indicates to the mind not only this personal resurrection from spiritual death in the soul, but it symbolizes the final and glorious resurrection of the pure in heart to eternal life. I do not say that the coming forth of vegetation in Spring-time proves that the soul is immortal, or that the dead shall rise, but I do say that it proves the *possibility* of such a coming forth.

Go and stand in yonder cemetery during the last days of Winter. The white tombstones all around tell of the dear departed, whose pulseless breasts are there beneath the ground. The leafless branches which swing to and fro, and the crisped grass which crackles beneath your footfall tell of the departed life which gave verdure and blossom in the days gone by. Then, as you stand there, ask, Shall these dead, from beneath these mounds, come forth to a new life? Ask one who disbelieves the Scriptures, and he tells you it will be impossible; ask another, and he will tell you it is not probable; ask still another, and he will tell you it is a great mystery. But, I ask, dares any man say the dead can not live again? Can not the power that once gave

them life and being give it back again? Is it mysterious? So is life in any form a mystery. And while you stand there amid the lonely tombstones, questioning yourself about the long-departed, asking, "If a man die, shall he live again?"—and skepticism says, No, and outright infidelity sneers at the credulity of the Christian who puts confidence in these promises—the winds die out, the soft South breezes set to quivering the leafless branches, the warm rain distills upon the soil from benignant skies, the great sun swings relatively nearer, and these lifeless trees begin to grow green, the buds burst out into leaves and flowers, the earth itself grows warm and heaves her bosom; the grass, like a new creation, comes forth in beauty; and all nature in a few short days has passed over from seeming death to life; all is changed from cheerless Winter to blushing, blooming, fragrant, and lovely Summer.

I say now, with emphasis, that the power adequate to the production of this change in the natural world is equal to the accomplishment of all that is affirmed in the Christian Scriptures concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the mystery of the one is not any greater than that of the other. We have seen the resurrection of vegetation, and we believe it

possible because we have seen it. The resurrection of dead bodies we have not seen; but the possibility of such an event no one dares call in question who believes in the existence of an omnipotent God, and who is observant of nature. Its probability no one will question who believes in the Scriptures. No more clearly does the Bible say there shall be Summer and Winter, seed-time and harvest, while the earth remains, than it declares we shall rise from the dead in some mysterious way. Reason, in her loftiest dicta, declares it possible; analogy, in her many forms, confirms the voice of reason.

And so, sitting at my graves in Spring-time, I believe my dear children will rise again, in God's way, and in God's time.

> "And they, new rising from the tomb,
> In luster brighter far shall shine;
> Revive with ever.-during bloom,
> Safe from diseases and decline."

As the Winter has passed away, and the flowers and birds have come, and the vine puts forth her tender branches, so may a Summer come in every human life. These restless and impatient natures, under the leadings of God, may become more trustful. These heavy burdens of life shall grow lighter as we become

stronger in faith and purer in heart. These clouds, which so often hang with sullen and threatening gloominess in our sky, shall become pillars of fire to light us on our way through the dark nights of our life-journey. These trials shall test our faith, and make us holier. These temptations shall be sources of moral power; for as we overcome them we gain strength. These troubles and sad bereavements shall, in the Father's hand, fashion us into spiritual beauty. These hard days and weary nights shall be made in some way to yield us sunny hours of sweet repose. These partings shall only serve to draw us toward the land where our dear ones are safely housed, where the Winter blast cometh never, and the tear will not dim the eye. O yes! The Winter, with its coldness, will pass away; the Summer of life's better day will come. God has promised it. The flowers will bloom in fadeless beauty. The sky will know no cloud. Death shall be unknown. Sin and sorrow shall be banished. Light, above the brightness of the sun, shall shine upon us. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Our Immortal Future.

"I HAVE learned
This doctrine from the vanishing of youth.
The pictured primer, true, is thrown aside;
But its first lesson liveth in my heart.
I shall go on through all eternity.
Thank God! I only am an embryo still,
The small beginning of a glorious soul,
An atom that shall fill immensity."

"Here is no bootless quest;
The city's name is Rest.
Here shall no fear appal;
Here love is all in all;
Here shalt thou win thy ardent soul's desire;
Here clothe thee in thy beautiful attire.
Lift, lift thy wondering eyes!
Yonder is Paradise!
And this fair, shining band
Are spirits of that land!
And these that throng to meet thee are thy kin,
Who have awaited thee, redeemed from sin.
The city gates unfold; enter, O enter in!"

XII.

Our Immortal Future.

THE Scriptures unfold to us many sublime and beautiful doctrines. The correspondence between what we naturally crave and what the blessed Gospel teaches is so marked as to force upon us the conviction of design. No more certainly is the eye adapted to the beam of light, or light made for the eye, than are the truths set forth in the Bible precisely suited to the varied cravings of universal humanity.

Furthermore, among all these great truths of the Bible, no one has a greater interest to us all than that which relates to our immortal future. That we are all passing away, is a trite saying. Death, whatever that word means, is in our world. The funeral *cortege*, the new-made grave, the mourning weed, are sights of our

every-day life. But is death the end? Is there a realm beyond the grave? St. Paul, in one place, exhorts us to look away from things seen to things unseen. He evidently believed in a life beyond the grave. In another place that same writer spoke of our body as a tabernacle that can be "dissolved," taken to pieces; but then he also tells us of our "house which is from heaven." As the temple at Jerusalem was to supersede the tabernacle of the wilderness, so when we quit this life-journey there awaits us a "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I say, then, it is true that we are to live on. As a majestic steamer glides along the river channel, and, sweeping around the curve, disappears from sight, so, when our friends die, they have just passed the bend in life's great river. To die is only to change; to take another step in life. Death has taken the place of translation in our world. We were born into this world, and through death we shall be born out of it and into the next. Death is the gateway to our glorious and immortal future. Life does not mean a certain number of years. Our life is not limited and confined to the present world; but it began when we began to be, and it shall go on and on for evermore.

Then we must conclude there is nothing in death to fear. It is not so much death as judgment which we dread. Death may be attended with physical pain; but nature makes provision, in a benumbed sensibility, for this. The child knows nothing of its birth; perhaps we shall be born into our new life without feeling the pains which so many dread. Take away sin, and there is nothing to fear in dying. "The sting of death is sin." It is a blessed truth that we are to live on. Our dear friends, who have parted from us are ours yet. This idea of our perpetual existence is something veritable; it is not a fiction of the imagination; it is not a mere tradition which has come down to us through the ages. It is not more certain that we grow hungry for food, or that we become weary and need rest, than it is true that all men expect to live in some sphere beyond the grave. The great procession of human life moves toward the grave with a solemn tread—the old, the young, the wise, the unwise, the good, the bad, the prince, the beggar, the civilized, the savage; but all go there believing in the great hereafter. Mankind can not be educated out of this belief. That has been tried. Time may convert men into giants or pigmies; climate may completely change the color; and habit, that determined

ruler of our species, may create a new psychological man. He may live in palace or hut, amid polar snows or burning tropics; but the thought of the great hereafter of his being he never loses. It goes with him by land and by sea. It comforts him in the camp of the soldier and in the shop of the artisan. Rob him of all he owns; reduce him to want, to slavery; but upward he gazes into the heavens, and believes that he shall dwell there in some blessed estate. Pope said of the "untutored Indian:"

> "And thinks, admitted to yon equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

There is in the human mind a natural desire to know. Logic is only the true order of thinking, a way of getting at the reason of things. If it is true that we are immortal, how shall we know it? Is it knowable? If it be true that they whom we call dead are living in some other and higher sphere of being; that we too shall arrive at that state, meet them, know them, converse with them, and love them,—what truth could be more lofty and inspiring? The thought thrills the soul, and makes every thing else seem small and unimportant.

If man is immortal, it must be, then, because of the creative act of God. His immortality is

an endowment of life. The soul or spirit life of mankind is as much of an observable phenomenon as the bodily life. We know of the properties of matter. We are conversant with the animal instincts; we define them; we write books about them. Who will say we are defining and writing about nothing? We write about this universal expectation of a future life, this perpetual and unsatisfied longing. Who will look away out over this longing and expectant world, and say the millions are cherishing a hope never to be realized? To doubt immortality is to doubt nature itself; to deny it is to deny the deepest convictions of the human soul. Those convictions come not of education; they are not born of logical syllogisms.

Immortality has its foundation in our intuitions. There are some truths we know in this way. Such are mathematical truths, called axioms, which are not, properly speaking, within the logical realm. It needs no labored intellectual process to prove that the half of any thing is less than the whole of it. I do not say these self-evident truths can not be proved systematically, but that any attempt in that direction is superfluous. Let us take this matter of the soul's immortality into the account as an intuition; then I only need to say, "I know."

I may not understand how I know. *I only know.* The new-born babe, by an infallible law of its being, turns to its mother's breast for nourishment. That is an instinct, God's law for the preservation of its tender life. The child knows nothing of its true relations to the mother, nor to the surrounding world; all these it has yet to learn. Now, in exactly the same way the human mind turns toward its higher state. We may not know all, as we shall by and by; but we look up and away to God and our future life by a law of our being, as surely as the child turns to its mother's breast for nourishment. The ideas of God and of the hereafter, though often vague, are in the mind. We need no other proof than that which the religious history of the world gives us.

It may be said truly that mere desires and longings do not sufficiently prove our immortality. I admit that a consciousness of our adaptation to another state does not prove that I am to possess that state. Men long after riches who are destined to be poor. Many a woman, that would grace a palace, lives in a hut. Many a man works in the shop, who is competent to be President. People desire to be happy, who are ever unhappy. But then, I say, these inborn desires, these unsatisfied longings of soul

for another state of being; the spiritual capacities, taken in connection with those deeper feelings; the thought, deep-written on the soul; these intuitions, which run out through all the life of man, which express themselves in temples and images, flaming altars, bleeding victims, and solemn services; convictions of soul that will be ever uppermost in human society, that will cling to man from the cradle to the grave; feelings of heart for which he stands ready to die; I say, these, all taken together, do prove something, after all. He who can explain away these facts of human life gives proof that he can believe any thing. The most credulous people of all mankind are they who can accept the cheerless teachings of infidelity.

Then, let me ask, is there any thing in the teachings of Christianity on this point that conflicts with reason? Intuitions ask no aid from logic. But still, let us not decry reason. On the other hand, we should always be ready to give "a reason for the hope that is within us." Every one who reasons upon this question, and accepts the general facts of human life, must come to the point of belief in the spiritual, and hence in the doctrine of immortality.

The particular kind of argument so generally made use of here is the analogical. It has been

said by some that analogy proves nothing. This is sometimes true, but not always so. I find in my studies of nature that a crawling worm is transformed into a beautiful butterfly, which sweeps gracefully and airily about as on wings of light. The butterfly is only the worm, transmuted, expanded, beautified. Here, now, is a fact which can not be denied. But what has this to do with *our* immortality? It does not prove that my child is living, or that I shall live again in some glorified state, any more than it proves that my horse or dog shall live again. But then, here is an effect; where is the cause? What power is there to transform the butterfly? Is it only a blind principle in nature which works out a result so grand? That can not be. Our sense revolts at such a conclusion. There is a benevolent, a wise, a powerful God, Creator of all things. He it is who transformed the worm. Then, may he not work out some such change in us? May not we too pass into our chrysalis state, and come forth on wings? The power which transforms the worm can change you. Here, in the Fatherhood of God, there is an adequate intelligence, adequate goodness and power. Hence, there is in this a possibility which must be admitted; and thus I find an answer to the objection brought against the

doctrine of the resurrection. Now, before any one can reasonably affirm an impossibility that any such thing can occur, he must dispose of this testimony of nature.

Analogy may not in itself rise to the highest form of proof; but, taken in connection with the plain teachings of Scripture, with the intuitions of the mind, and along with the experiences of Christians for these ages, it does prove something, after all. It was in this light an apostle spoke the words: "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

This immortal principle in humanity is like the vital germ in a grain of wheat—it is life itself, and life-giving. A grain of wheat may be sealed up in a vase, and kept from sunshine and from rain, and thus never produce its like; so the human spirit may be fettered by the bonds of superstition, perverted by sin, stifled with unbelief, and literally crushed out of being. The vital germ in the grain of wheat can only fulfill its mission when all the conditions essential to its proper development are met. There must be congenial soil, moisture, and a certain degree of warmth, or it will only decay in the ground. So the human soul can only rise to its

true state by education, by spiritual baptism, God dwelling in man makes him grandly, gloriously immortal.

Intimately related to the question of our immortality is that other subject which puzzles so many, the resurrection of the dead. The old question of Greek philosophy, propounded two thousand years ago, is asked by the material philosophers of to-day: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Let us look into it a moment. No doctrine is set forth by the Savior and by the apostles with more emphasis than that of the resurrection of the dead. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v, 25–29.) "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv, 44.) Equally certain is it written, "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. xv, 50.) "With what body do they come?" Not this *literal* body which goes into the grave, surely! Admitting it to

be possible for the Almighty to give us this identical body (for with him all things are possible), yet is it probable? Do the Scriptures bear us out in the belief of a literal bodily resurrection? If this literal body is to come forth, then the thousands of deformities are to be perpetuated in heaven through all eternity, else in those cases a special miracle must interpose to abolish literal deformities. If the literal body, which goes into the grave, is to rise, then all these bodily organs must be in heaven. But these bodies are composed of blood and bone and muscle; oxygen, hydrogen, lime, and iron enter into the formation of this body. Are they to be made immortal? It can not be that pure spiritual beings are to be materialized in this way.

How, then, are we to understand the question of the resurrection? I will illustrate my meaning, hoping rather to confirm the reader's belief in the doctrine than to drive him away by enforcing belief in a dogma, against the sober convictions of reason and the plain teachings of Scripture. Let us not put up human judgment in the room of revelation, but let us properly interpret Scripture. I hold in my hand, for example, a piece of crude carbon, in the form of common charcoal. It is a black,

unsightly thing, which leaves a mark on whatever it touches. I hold in my other hand a beautiful diamond, queen of the jewels, which gathers up the straggling rays of light into bouquets of radiant beauty. But what is the diamond? The carbon, changed, crystallized. Chemists have tried to manufacture diamonds out of charcoal, but no human science has so far been able to accomplish it. Still, there is a Power that can do the work. God can. We know he has done it; every flashing diamond declares it.

This human body, as it goes into the grave, is the crude carbon; the resurrection body is the lustrous diamond, resplendent with all the glory of heaven. There will be just such a resurrection, shall I say a crystallization? My child will have a body as much more beautiful than the body which was laid in the casket as the diamond is more beautiful than the charcoal. John, on the Island of Patmos, was permitted to see one of the glorified beings of heaven. Possibly it may have been Enoch or Elijah, who were translated bodily. His first impulse was to fall down and worship one so lovely and so God-like, but he was prevented from doing so. "See thou do it not," said the angel; "for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the

prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God."

All this, you say, looks quite reasonable, but does the Scripture allow of this interpretation? Paul writes: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; for in this [body] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." What is meant by "house not made with hands?" "house which is from heaven?" In death, I have before said, we have the birth into a new life. The grain, of necessity, must perish before the new stalk can come forth. "Therefore that which thou sowest is not quickened [made alive], except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." (1 Cor. xv, 36–38.)

The body you sow is not the "body that shall be," says Paul. Standing by the lifeless form of my child I read: "Sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual

body." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed."

To carry my figure out fully, it may be proper for me to say that when a substance crystallizes every impurity is thrown off. A crystal always presents the substance of the matter crystallized absolutely pure. The new spiritual body, "the house which is from heaven," will be perfectly pure, free from all deformity; it will be a glorious body, a spiritual substance like unto Christ in his glorified state. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And so I read: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Immortality! There is a deep inspiration in the thought. As from mountain-top to mountain-top beacon-fires have answered each other, and armies have been guided to victory, so in the victorious march of faith humanity has had

its mountain-tops, where men have asked questions concerning the future, and received their answers. On one of these I see Abraham of old offering up Isaac; and, as he was about to execute the decree that should send him childless through the world, with crushed hopes, his prophetic eye took in another mountain, separated farther in time than space, where another and grander offering bespoke the world's redemption. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and was glad. Away yonder, in the dim and shadowy distance, I see Job, reeling beneath the strokes of an adverse providence, asking, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And across the valley of the centuries, from the mount of God, is borne the message of Jesus, the "first-fruits of them that slept," saying: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John xi, 25.)

There may be mystery in all these things; but there is no disproof in mystery. We do not know as much as we shall know a thousand or a million years hence. What we do not understand now we shall understand some time, or some *eternity*. How and when this resurrection, this "change," shall come, we need not know. Sufficient it is for us to say, *Credo;* and

to every command of God that leads up to the higher and better life, *Volo*. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrines."

Heaven.

Turn now, dear reader, and let us consider somewhat of the future home of these immortal souls and bodies. If we are to live on, what shall be the nature of our residence? where shall be that eternal home? On one occasion the Savior said to his disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." This was said to those disciples to cheer their drooping spirits; for they had left all to follow Jesus, who was himself so poor that "he had not where to lay his head." It was needful that they should have some promise on which to lean. They had left their homes, their friends, and their employments, and had taken up with a new kind of life, one which would involve deprivations, enmity, persecution, and even death itself. They were doubtless at this time a little homesick; they had that strange feeling of loneliness so common when one has

removed to a new place, or is choosing a new mode of life. Just then, when they were so much needed, they received those comforting words from the lips of him whose fortunes they had made their own, and on whose strange words they hung. It was befitting that he who said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more," should also say, "I go to prepare a place for you."

And what, I ask, do we all need in this life of uncertainties, trials, and bereavements, more than some sweet whispering of the better land? We can endure much when we are assured that there will be an end of suffering, and that the gloaming of the morning will give place to the brightness of full-orbed day.

What a cheerless existence ours would be, did no light shine out upon us from the invisible world. In the language of Bowring:

> "If all our hopes and all our fears
> Were prisoned in life's narrow bound;
> If, travelers through this vale of tears,
> We saw no better world beyond;
> O what could check the rising sigh?
> What earthly thing could pleasure give?
> O who would venture then to die?
> O who could then endure to live?"

As I have said before, there is implanted in our being that thought or sentiment which

points to the hereafter. Go and read up the history of the human race from the beginning of time, and you will be impressed with the uniform testimony which all human records, whether carved in stone or traced on parchment, bear to this settled conviction of the human heart. The monuments man has built, the tombs he has sacredly guarded, the temples where he has worshiped, all tell the same story. The human soul lives in constant expectation of a future life. In catacombs and in pyramids, kings and princes, clad in regal attire, though dead, sit in solemn state, waiting these scores of buried centuries to resume the scepters of their former sovereignty.

In some countries it has been the custom to burn the dead; but it was believed that fire would serve as a purifier to refine the soul, and that on wavering flame, made brilliant with colors imparted by wine and fragrant with incense, the ethereal particles alone were borne to heaven. And so strong has been this belief concerning the future that, through all antiquity, they buried with the dead those things that delighted them most on earth. Rings still bedeck the blackened fingers of buried Egyptian beauties, and the cold hand of the Greek still grasps the obolus, wherewith to reward the

grim ferryman for his passage over Acheron. The Indian warrior sleeps close beside the bones of his steed; his bow and quiver are in readiness for the "happy hunting-grounds of eternity."

But not only has there been in the mind of mankind this general idea of a future state, but there has always been coupled with it the belief of rewards and punishments. In the writings of heathen poets there are descriptions of the abodes of the departed. Homer wrote of Elysian Fields, which lay far to the westward, on the distant margins of the earth. In subsequent times these abodes were located below the earth, and were described as a place blessed with perpetual Spring, verdant and lovely, where flowers bloomed in beauty, where groves cast cooling shadows, and sparkling waters flowed to quench the thirst. There in perfect bliss dwelt the virtuous—there was to be found the true tranquillity. When we sing,

> "There I shall bathe my weary soul
> In seas of heavenly rest,
> And not a wave of trouble roll
> Across my peaceful breast,"

we but express a sentiment which belongs to our whole race. We have heaven and hell in our Christian theology, answering to Elysium

and Tartarus in the old mythologies of the pagan world.

And now, dear reader, we are nearing the end of this book, we are soon to part. You and I have dear friends who have gone away to the spirit-land. We have stood side by side, where our loved ones sleep, and we have thought of the heaven to which they have gone, and queried about it, and at times have longed for the happy greetings that await us on the other shore. But where is heaven? What constitutes its joys? Who are its inhabitants? Is it a state merely, or a veritable place? Is it around us, or is it away in some distant portion of space? Shall I be there? Shall I meet my precious children there? Are our fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, friends, there, inside the gates of glory? These are questions that spring up in the mind of all who have been bereft, and who has not? It seems almost strange that our Heavenly Father has not told us plainly where heaven is. Nowhere in the Scriptures is it distinctly stated. We can only conjecture, and that we may do. Jesus said he came down from heaven; when he ascended he went "up into heaven." He said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Paul was in some mysterious way taken up into

heaven. John, on Patmos, caught glimpses of the great city, and the throne and throng. But just where it is not one of all the writers of Scripture has told us.

It may be asked, then, in view of this noticeable silence, is it proper for us to seek this knowledge? I answer, It is right for us to know any thing we can know. But our Savior is far more concerned about our readiness for heaven than about our knowledge of its locality. The one is essential; the other is not. Heaven's gate will surely open wide to every purified soul at death. Purity is the only passport to the joys of heaven.

But what do the Scriptures say about the abodes of the saved? Let us bear in mind that the joys of heaven are spiritual. The life of a soul in heaven is a spiritual life, and hence heaven must be a spiritual abode. Possibly the reason why no one of the inspired writers has given us positive information concerning it is because of a natural impossibility to do so. To our minds, in our present state, it would be impossible to convey accurately the true idea. Hence, no attempt has been made, save in the gorgeous imagery of Oriental diction. The Bible speaks to us of the abodes of the saved, and in imagination we form varied and beautiful pictures.

We get our first ideas of it by comparison. St. Paul says: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, . . . because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." And then, again, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In these and similar passages the life to come is portrayed in a way which indicates its superior glory. No wonder that Paul said he "saw and heard things which it was not lawful to utter." Heaven is called a "life." "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." It is called "eternal life." "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life." It is spoken of as "glory," and "glory of God." "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality." "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

The word *heaven* is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and means to be lifted up, or raised in some

way. Hence the common expression, "Up to heaven." But we know that the words *up* and *down* are relative terms. They who go up on one side of the globe go down with reference to the other side. The Jews believed in three heavens: first, the region of the atmosphere; next, the regions of the planets; while their "third heavens" lay still beyond. But the Jews had no correct idea of space, and hence these divisions partook of the poetry which runs through all the Jewish writings.

Heaven is sometimes called "Paradise," in allusion to Eden, the first dwelling-place of man. "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." As the word *Paradise* refers to Eden, so the expression, "Inheritance of the saints," alludes for its origin to the "Promised Land." "There remaineth therefore a rest [in the spiritual "Promised Land"] to the people of God." It is enough for us to know that almost every word which is used to express delight, and every figure of speech that can be employed to convey to our minds the idea of bliss, is made to symbolize the Christian's home after death. But still no word or figure tells us directly where heaven is, whither our dear ones

have gone. We wait, and look, and hope; but by and by the curtain will rise, and we shall behold the land of glory.

Notwithstanding this silence, however, I have thought we may infer something concerning it. In my speculations I conclude that the universe is God's house. The word "mansions" may relate to the stars, those diamonds that sparkle in the crown of night; or the word may signify ample room, spaciousness, grandeur, beauty. Our friends are not extinct; they are somewhere. They have a residence, in fact; for Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you." But where? Some have imagined a vast central orb, around which all these myriad worlds revolve in solemn procession; a center where God, the Great Unseen, is, where "the pure in heart shall see God;" the holy of holies in this temple, which is greater and more glorious than Solomon's,—but there is no way to verify it. Others have supposed the sun, or some distant star, to be the place to which we are appointed after death. How all this may be we can not tell. One thing is certain. Heaven is, first of all, a state—a condition. No sin can enter there. Its inhabitants are holy. If they were not, it would not be heaven. It is a state of freedom from all the ills which affect us in this life. "God shall wipe away all

tears from their eyes." The cheek will not grow pale with sickness. The step will not tire as we tread the fields of Paradise. Progress will be the word. Infinite worlds will be before us, to be visited, studied, known. Did you ever experience the peculiar thrill which arises from a new discovery, a new, fresh, bright thought? It took sleep from your eyelids, and hunger from your body. So I imagine the outgoing soul will ever be thrilled, and the ages of eternity spent in exploring God's house and growing God-like. That will be true rest, true joy, true holiness. "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

It seems to me a proper inference from the Scriptures that heaven means the "boundless universe of God," in which, somewhere, Christ's presence, like a glory-cloud, is more signally manifest. The universe has in it a holy of holies, where the Lord of glory dwells, where "the pure in heart see God." But the redeemed soul is not confined; it enjoys the "liberty of the sons of God." Then, going up to heaven signifies becoming invisible, and "coming down from heaven" means becoming visible.

In the twenty-first chapter of Revelation John gives us a beautiful description of the celestial city: "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth, and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

But this is figurative, and the whole description is in language which conveys to us the highest conceptions of grandeur and beauty.

When Jesus was on the earth he spoke of himself as the "Son of man, which is in heaven." He stood at that moment in a twofold relation. He touched at each instant of his world-life two distinct and separate planes of being. As a man he stood related to time and to the earth, and as a God he touched the realm of the Infinite. He was on earth and in heaven at the same moment. Heaven and earth met in him, and should, in a sense, so meet in all of us.

A beautiful account is given to us in the sixth chapter of Second Kings. Elisha, the prophet, was pursued by a detachment of the army of the Assyrian King to Dothan, where he was completely hemmed in. His servant was terror-stricken. But when Elisha looked out of his tent-door and beheld the array he exclaimed, "Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them." And then he prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened, that he might be able to see spiritually. The prayer was answered, and the servant looked up, and, lo! the mountain flamed with a shining host, "full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The prophet was pursued by an army arrayed for his destruction—one lone man more than a match for the Assyrian host! "Man's extremity is God's

opportunity." God revealed himself in symbols of protecting power. O, this is a precious thought. The heavenly world is near us. Our dear friends may be around us. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?" Admitting that the heaven of the saints is millions of miles away in space, yet distance means nothing to a spirit, and so heaven is "nigh at hand, and not afar off." I love the old Christianity which taught us about these celestial ministries. The poets have put it into their sacred hymns centuries ago, and we sing:

"There are angels hovering round."

Watts wrote:

"I lay my body down to sleep;
Peace is the pillow for my head;
While well-appointed angels keep
Their watchful stations round my bed."

And Toplady:

"Thy ministering spirits descend,
To watch while the saints are asleep;
By day and by night they attend,
The heirs of salvation to keep."

And so on. I might quote at great length from the Wesleys, and all the old sacred poets.

The world has heard much of spiritual visitants in all ages. Jesus said one day, when his disciples were alarmed about his personal safety, that if he willed he could summon to his aid "twelve legions of angels." The beck of his hand would have covered Olivet or Moriah with an angelic host. St. Stephen, the protomartyr, while yet in the body, looked up, and saw heaven open, and Jesus sitting on the right-hand of the throne of God. That is, he was in the place of highest honor. And yet, because fanatical people have carried this old Bible belief to illogical extremes, and have deluded the simple-minded with all sorts of vagaries in the form of *spiritism*, we have almost come to be disbelievers in these angelic ministries. Could we open our eyes at any time, could we see as we yet shall see, with pure spiritual vision, we should behold the "great company." Our eyes would be greeted with the faces of our dear ones, as they appear in their glorified state. Could we but hear as we yet shall hear, their songs would make us glad. Could we but know now as we will know by and by, death would not be the dreadful thing which it seems to be to so many.

There is not one whose eye rests upon this page who has not some dear friend in the

spirit-land. My children are there. Mother, your dear babe is there. Of their forms we know, and can know, nothing, positively nothing, only that they are not children in intelligence. The law of mind is to expand. They have grown tall in this direction. When we meet them in their glorified state, they will be able to lead us and teach us. They roam through fields of light and beauty, "forever with the Lord." How much of woe they have escaped! Not a night passes on this earth but some poor souls are shipwrecked, and on broken timbers they drift wildly about before the tempestuous winds and mad waves, the sport of the pitiless billows. Not a night passes but the poor, fever-burnt sufferer, or wasted consumptive, on whose cheek burns the hectic fire, with that unnatural redness, like that which "Autumn paints upon the perished leaf," tosses about in weariness and in weakness, waiting and watching for the morning. Not a night passes but many are hurrying through miles of space and darkness, to see once more the faces of their beloved friends ere death snaps the silver thread. Never a day goes by but on the streets of the great city wander the poor, homeless ones of earth, often hungry and cold, uncheered by word or look,

or grasp of friendly hand. From all these turmoils, sickness and poverty, pain and death, they, our dear ones, are safe.

I think there is a spiritual universe within the material, just as we have spiritual natures within our bodily forms. We see the body; but the soul or spirit is invisible. We see the material universe; but we see not the spiritual. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv, 18.) To the pure, at death, heaven opens; visions of beauty burst on the eye; sounds seraphic fall on the ear. The throne, the river, the tree of life, may be symbols; but they must, they do, symbolize something. The reality is greater than the figure. God is not mocking us. We are not lured on by these intuitions and pictures to nonentity. Life, which is so rich in thought and feeling, will not go out in an eternal sleep.

May we all "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits

of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel;" and thus all be safe "Inside the Gates!"